DECLARATION

I, Masaaki IWAMI, 3-22, Asagaya-minami 1-chome, Suginami-ku, Tokyo, Japan do solemnly and sincerely declare that I well understand the Japanese language and English language and the attached English version is full, true and faithful translation of the copy of the Japanese Patent Laid-open No. Hei 10-93905.

And I made this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true.

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[Title of the Invention]

Program-Information Recording Medium, Information Recording Apparatus and Recording Reservation Apparatus

[Abstract]

[Object]

Problems to be solved by the invention are how to quickly search various kinds of information on TV programs and view the information by making use a recording medium used for recording such information as well as a program-recording reservation apparatus utilizing the recording medium and how to make a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program onto the recording medium with ease and with a high degree of accuracy without the need to refer to a newspaper, a TV magazine or other media.

[Solving Means]

The present invention makes it not only possible to display a program table and various kinds of information such as program contents in any format on the basis of program information, which has been distributed by a broadcasting station and recorded in advance on a recording medium 16 such as a DVD-RAM, but also possible to directly specify a desired TV program shown in the

program table in order to make a reservation for an operation to record the desired program onto a recording medium and possible to manage reservation information by associating the reservation information with an index stored in a program and index information area of the recording medium 16 as the program information of the specified program. In addition, in an operation to actually record a specified TV program onto the recording medium in accordance with the reservation information, it is also possible to record the moving picture of the program in a moving-picture recording area of the recording medium 16 as well as to attach additional data such as a recording date, a recording start position and a recording duration to the post-recording index stored in the program and index information area as the program information of the specified program in management of post-recording indexes.

[What is Claimed is]
[Claim 1]

A recording medium used for recording program information, said recording medium characterized in that TV program information including at least the number of a channel through which a TV program is broadcasted, the title of said TV program, the broadcasting date of said TV program, the broadcasting start time of said TV program and the broadcasting end time of said TV program has been recorded in said recording medium in advance for every TV program broadcasted through a channel and for every channel.

[Claim 2]

An information recording apparatus characterized in that said information recording apparatus comprises:

information acquiring means for acquiring program information including at least the number of a channel through which a TV program is broadcasted, the title of said TV program, the broadcasting date of said TV program, the broadcasting start time of said TV program and the broadcasting end time of said TV program for every TV program broadcasted through a channel and for every channel;

information storage means used for storing said

program information; and

information recording means for recording said program information stored in said information storage means onto a recording medium.

[Claim 3]

A program-recording reservation apparatus making use of a recording medium used for storing program information, said program-recording reservation apparatus characterized in that said program-recording reservation apparatus comprises:

read means for reading out program information including at least the number of a channel through which a TV program is broadcasted, the title of said TV program, the broadcasting date of said TV program, the broadcasting start time of said TV program and the broadcasting end time of said TV program from said recording medium used for storing said program information in advance for every TV program broadcasted through a channel and for every channel;

output means for outputting a signal for displaying said program information read out by said read means from said recording medium on display means; and

reservation setting means for setting a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto said

recording medium on the basis of said program information displayed on said display means.

[Detailed Description of the Invention]
[0001]

[Technical Field to which the Invention Pertains]

The present invention relates to a recording medium used for storing TV program information, an information recording apparatus for recording program information onto the recording medium and a program-recording reservation apparatus making use of the recording medium.

[0002]

[Prior Art]

In general, in order to make a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program of a TV broadcast onto a recording medium in advance, it is necessary to look at a newspaper or a magazine to search for the desired TV program and confirm the broadcasting time of the TV program. Then, it is necessary to set the number of a channel through which the TV program is broadcasted, the broadcasting date of the TV program as well as the recording start and end times of the TV program by making use of a video deck or the like.

To put it concretely, a reservation list showing

information including items such as a channel number, a program title, a broadcasting date as well as recording start and end times for every broadcasted TV program is transferred to a TV connected to the video deck and displayed on the screen of the TV. Then, the user makes a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program selected from the reservation list by entering data to the information items displayed on the screen onto a recording medium.

[0004]

Recently, every TV program advertised in TV program column of a newspaper, a TV magazine or other media is represented by a number referred to as a G code of eight or fewer digits. In this case, the user can make a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program onto a recording medium by transferring the G code of the desired TV program to the main unit of a video deck.

[0005]

By the way, when the user makes a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program onto a recording medium, the user must carry out an operation to enter pieces of information such as the number of a channel through which the TV program is broadcasted, the broadcasting date of the TV program as well as the recording start and end times of the TV program to items displayed on the screen of a TV while confirming the information by looking at a newspaper, a magazine or the like or the user must carry out an operation to enter the G code of the TV program as a numerical array to a video deck. Thus, the user may make an input mistake in entering the reservation information to the screen of the TV or the G code to the video deck, inadvertently making an incorrect reservation.

[0006]

In addition, every TV program advertised in TV program columns of a newspaper or a magazine does not include other information such as the contents of the TV program and the profiles of performers appearing in the TV program. Thus, the user must find the other information by looking at information sources other than the TV program columns. An example of such an information source is a special magazine dedicated to TV programs.

[0007]

[Problems to be Solved by the Invention]

As described above, in accordance with the method to make a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program onto a recording medium by making use

of the conventional video deck, the user must enter pieces of information such as the number of a channel through which the TV program is broadcasted, the broadcasting date of the TV program as well as the recording start and end times of the TV program to items displayed on the screen of a TV while confirming the information by looking at the TV program columns of a newspaper, a special magazine or the like. Thus, the user is apt to make an input mistake in entering the reservation information to the screen of the TV, raising a problem that an incorrect recording operation is carried out inadvertently.

[8000]

In addition, the user cannot immediately obtain more detailed information such as the contents of a TV program and the profiles of performers appearing in the TV program, causing a problem of inconvenience.

[0009]

In order to solve the problems described above, it is a first object of the present invention to provide a TV program information recording medium that allows the user to immediately obtain various kinds of information on TV programs.

[0010]

In addition, it is a second object of the present invention to provide a program-recording reservation apparatus provided with the recording medium used for recording TV program information as an apparatus that allows the user to make a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program onto the recording medium with ease and with a high degree of accuracy without the need to refer to a newspaper, a TV magazine or other media.

[0011]

[Means for Solving the Problems]

A program-information recording medium according to claim 1 described in the specification of the present invention is characterized in that TV program information including at least the number of a channel through which a TV program is broadcasted, the title of the TV program, the broadcasting date of the TV program, the broadcasting start time of the TV program and the broadcasting end time of the TV program has been recorded in the program-information recording medium in advance for every TV program broadcasted through a channel and for every channel.

[0012]

An example of the program information recording

medium according to claim 1 is an optical disk on which TV program information including at least the number of a channel through which a TV program is broadcasted, the title of the TV program, the broadcasting date of the TV program, the broadcasting start time of the TV program and the broadcasting end time of the TV program in advance for every TV program broadcasted through a channel and for every channel. Thus, by mounting the optical disk used for storing TV program information in advance on a reproduction apparatus, the user can instantly search the optical disk for specific information on a desired TV program and see the specific information.

[0013]

In addition, an information recording apparatus according to claim 2 described in the specification of the present invention is characterized in that the information recording apparatus employs:

information acquiring means for acquiring program information including at least the number of a channel through which a TV program is broadcasted, the title of the TV program, the broadcasting date of the TV program, the broadcasting start time of the TV program and the broadcasting end time of the TV program for every TV

program broadcasted through a channel and for every channel;

information storage means used for storing the program information; and

information recording means for recording the program information stored in the information storage means onto a recording medium.

[0014]

That is to say, the information recording apparatus according to claim 2 is installed in a key station, at which the user can stop by with ease, as an information recording apparatus for acquiring program information including at least the number of a channel through which a TV program is broadcasted, the title of the TV program, the broadcasting date of the TV program, the broadcasting start time of the TV program and the broadcasting end time of the TV program and storing the program information in a memory for every TV program broadcasted through a channel and for every channel. The information recording apparatus acquires the program information and records the information into a recording medium carried by the user. Examples of the recording medium carried by the user include a compact and rewritable optical disk, a compact and rewritable magnetic disk and a compact and

rewritable magneto-optical disk, which are each used as a DVD-RAM, a removable HDD or an MO. Then, on the basis of the program information recorded on the recording medium carried by the user, the user is capable of easily making a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program onto the recording medium. The user may not carry such a recording medium. In this case, the information recording apparatus records the program information on a new recording medium such as a CD-ROM which is not rewritable and the new recording medium can be sold to the user. Then, on the basis of the program information recorded on the purchased recording medium carried, the user is also capable of easily making a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program onto a recording medium in the same way.

[0015]

A program-recording reservation apparatus claimed by claim 3 described in the specification of the present invention as a program-recording reservation apparatus making use of a recording medium used for storing program information is characterized in that the program-recording reservation apparatus employs:

read means for reading out program information including at least the number of a channel through which

a TV program is broadcasted, the title of the TV program, the broadcasting date of the TV program, the broadcasting start time of the TV program and the broadcasting end time of the TV program from the recording medium used for storing the program information in advance for every TV program broadcasted through a channel and for every channel;

output means for outputting a signal for displaying the program information read out by the read means from the recording medium on display means; and

reservation setting means for setting a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto the recording medium on the basis of the program information displayed on the display means.

[0016]

That is to say, the program-recording reservation apparatus described in claim 3 as a program-recording reservation apparatus making use of a recording medium used for storing program information reads out program information including at least the number of a channel through which a TV program is broadcasted, the title of the TV program, the broadcasting date of the TV program, the broadcasting start time of the TV program and the broadcasting end time of the TV program from the

recording medium such as an optical disk used for storing the program information in advance for every TV program broadcasted through a channel and for every channel, displaying the program information on the display means and sets a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto the recording medium on the basis of the program information displayed on the display means. Thus, the program information including at least a channel number, a program title, a broadcasting date as well as recording start and end times for a desired TV program can be set as reservation information for an operation to record the desired TV program on the recording medium as it is.

[0017]

[Mode for Carrying Out the Invention]

A preferred embodiment of the present invention is explained by referring to diagrams as follows.

[0018]

Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing the configuration of a program-recording reservation apparatus according to the embodiment of the present invention.

[0019]

The configuration of the program-recording reservation apparatus includes:

a disk reproduction unit 15 for reproducing information from a recording medium 16 such as an optical disk;

an input unit 14 for receiving an instruction to search information recorded in the recording medium 16 for necessary information and typically make a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program onto the recording medium 16 on the basis of the necessary information;

an information searching unit 13 for receiving an instruction signal from the input unit 14 and searching information recorded in the recording medium 16 for necessary information in accordance with the instruction signal;

a picture interface unit 12 serving as an interface for providing a TV set 10 with, among others, a reproduced picture and a menu displayed along a TV program listing and information found in a search process; and

a recording/reproduction unit 11 for recording a picture and a sound which are received from a video deck or the like and for reproducing the picture and the sound.

[0020]

In order to display an actual picture, an ordinary

TV set 10 having a signal receiving function is used.
[0021]

The recording medium 16 is used for recording TV program information in advance. The TV program information includes the number of a channel through which the TV program is broadcasted, the name of a TV station broadcasting the TV program, a broadcasting date of the TV program, a broadcasting period (that is, broadcasting start and end times) of the TV program, the title of the TV program, main performers appearing in the TV program and contents of the TV program. When the recording medium 16 is mounted on the disk reproduction unit 15 in a reproduction operation, the information searching unit 13 searches information already recorded on the recording medium 16 as TV program information for necessary information to be generated as TV program listing and displays the table on the TV set 10 through the picture interface unit 12.

[0022]

In addition to the program table created from the program information already recorded the recording medium 16 as TV program listing and displayed on the TV set 10, the TV set 10 also displays a menu of pieces of information including a genre item, a program reservation

item, a reservation cancelation item, a program content item and a performer profile item. The user can then operate the input unit 14 in order to move a cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of one of the items. When the user operates the input unit 14 to carry out a click operation with the cursor already positioned at the program content item for example, a programcontent portion corresponding to a preview of a movie presented as a TV program selected from the TV program listing is displayed. When the user operates the input unit 14 to carry out a click operation with the cursor already positioned at the performer profile item for example, a list of performers acting in a TV program selected from the TV program listing is displayed. user further operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of a desired one of the performers on the list and carry out a click operation to select the desired performer, information on the profile of the desired performer is displayed.

[0023]

With the cursor pointing to information on a desired TV program selected from those displayed in the displayed TV program listing, the user can click the

program reservation item shown in the menu in order to read out program-recording reservation data included in the information on the desired TV program and set the reservation data in the recording/reproduction unit 11 as it is. The program-recording reservation data includes the number a channel through which the desired TV program is to be broadcasted, the broadcasting date of the desired TV program as well as the broadcasting start and end times of the desired TV program.

[0024]

In addition, if the user selects the genre item shown in the menu displayed along with the TV program listing, the user is allowed to select a TV program among those of the selected genre, which can be a genre representing musical TV programs, movie TV programs, sport TV programs, education TV programs, go and Japanese-chess TV programs, drama TV programs, news TV programs, weather-forecast TV programs or TV programs of another kind. If the genre item is selected, TV programs of the selected genre are displayed typically along with TV program information. In this case, the TV program information includes the number a channel through which the TV program is to be broadcasted by a TV station, the name of the TV station broadcasting the TV program, a

broadcasting date of the TV program, a broadcasting period (that is, broadcasting start and end times) of the TV program, performers appearing in the TV program and the contents of the TV program. Of course, a reservation for a program recording operation can be made not only to record one TV program onto a recording medium, but also to record a plurality of TV programs.

[0025]

Fig. 2 is a diagram showing a route for obtaining TV program information for a case in which a DVD (digital video disk) - RAM 16 is used as the recording medium 16 to be mounted on the disk reproduction unit 15 employed in the program-recording reservation apparatus.

A broadcasting station 21 distributes TV program information to key stations 22 by typically transmitting a broadcast signal conveying the information. A key station 22 receives the broadcast signal and keeps the program information conveyed by the signal by storing the information in a memory.

[0027]

The key station 22 is typically a convenience store, a book store or a kiosk in a train station at which the user can stop by with ease. In the key station 22, an

information recording apparatus is installed for recording TV program information onto the recording medium 16, which is a DVD-RAM in this case.
[0028]

The information recording apparatus adopts the method of an automatic selling machine. That is to say, when the user pays a fee determined in advance, the information recording apparatus carries out a work such as an operation to record predetermined data of TV program information onto the DVD-RAM 16. In other words, the information recording apparatus sells the data determined in advance to the user.

[0029]

The information recording apparatus includes:

information acquiring means for acquiring program

information used for creating a TV program listing from

the broadcasting station 21 or another source;

information storage means used for storing the TV program listing and various kinds of other data, which have been acquired by the information acquiring means; and

information recording means for recording the TV program listing and various kinds of other data, which have been stored in the storage means, onto a DVD-RAM 16.

[0030]

The information storage means is used for storing most recently updated data received from the broadcasting station 21 through an online transmission making use of a telephone line or the like or through an offline transfer. The data is updated periodically at time intervals determined in advance. For example, the data is updated every other week or weekly.

[0031]

If the user owns the DVD-RAM 16, the user inserts money with an amount determined in advance into a fee insertion opening of the information recording apparatus and inserts the DVD-RAM 16 into the apparatus through an insertion opening provided for the DVD-RAM 16. As the money and the DVD-RAM 16 are inserted into the information recording apparatus, the information recording means employed in the apparatus records most recent data onto the DVD-RAM 16.

[0032]

If the user does not own a DVD-RAM 16, on the other hand, the user can purchase a recording medium, which is a DVD-RAM 16 having most recent data recorded thereon, from the information recording apparatus adopting the method of an automatic selling machine.

[0033]

Fig. 3 is a diagram showing a typical data format of program information distributed by a broadcasting station 21.

[0034]

Fig. 4 is a diagram showing the recording state of information recorded on a recording medium 16 mounted on the disk reproduction unit 15 employed in the program-recording reservation apparatus as information on each TV program for every channel.

[0035]

As shown in Fig. 3, program information distributed by a broadcasting station 21 includes a header and information on every TV program broadcasted by the station 21.

[0036]

The header includes the number of a channel through which TV programs are broadcasted, a broadcasting date, the number of such TV programs and an offset to each of the TV programs. The TV program information includes the title of the TV program, the broadcasting start time of the TV program, the broadcasting end time of the TV program, the genre identification code of the TV program and a description introducing the TV program.

[0037]

An offset to a TV program is explained as follows. Let the TV program information be searched for TV program 10. In this case, the information recording apparatus does not search the entire TV program information for TV program 10 by scrolling the information from TV program 1 to TV program 10. Instead, the information recording apparatus makes use of a function to find desired TV program 10 directly by referring to an offset included in the header as the offset to TV program 10.

The information recording apparatus then records pieces of program information each shown in Fig. 3 as information provided for a channel onto a recording medium 16 by arranging the pieces of program information into a sequence of such pieces for channels 1 to N as shown in Fig. 4.

[0039]

The following description explains concrete functions for processing various kinds of information. The functions are executed by the program-recording reservation apparatus in operations to record TV program information, information on a program-recording reservation and information on an already recorded TV

program onto the DVD-RAM 16. The functions include a recording/reproduction function, a search/display function, a reservation setting function and an edit function.

[0040]

In this case, the disk reproduction unit 15 employed in the program-recording reservation apparatus shown in Fig. 1 is configured to operate as a disk recording/reproduction unit for carrying recording and reproduction operations on a DVD-RAM 16.

[0041]

(Recording/Reproduction Function)

Fig. 5 is a diagram showing designation of areas on the DVD-RAM 16 as information recording areas.

An area on the inner side of the DVD-RAM 16 is designated as a program and index information recording area 16a whereas an area on the outer side of the DVD-RAM 16 is designated as a moving-image recording area 16b.

[0043]

The program and index information recording area

16a is used for recording information, which is received

from a broadcasting station 21 through a key station 22

as TV program information for each channel, in a

recording state shown in Fig. 4. The format of TV program information of a channel is shown in Fig. 3 as described above. In addition, the program and index information recording area 16a is also used for recording other data such as information on reservations for operations to record the TV programs onto the DVD-RAM 16 and post-recording indexes.

[0044]

On the other hand, the moving-image recording area 16b is used for recording TV programs each recorded on the DVD-RAM 16 in accordance with a reservation for an operation to record the program onto the DVD-RAM 16.

[0045]

Fig. 6 shows a table showing typical post-recording indexes recorded in the program and index information recording area 16a of the DVD-RAM 16.

[0046]

A post-recording index is information on an already recorded TV program. A post-recording index for a TV program includes the title of the TV program, the type (or the genre) of the TV program, the recording date of the TV program, the recording start position of the TV program and the recording duration of the TV program.

[0047]

The post-recording indexes are each recorded in the program and index information recording area 16a for a TV program as information including the title of the TV program, the type (or the genre) of the TV program, the recording date of the TV program, the recording start position of the TV program and the recording duration of the TV program as shown in Fig. 6. The post-recording indexes are useful in searching the DVD-RAM 16 for a moving picture (which is a TV program) recorded on the DVD-RAM 16.

[0048]

Fig. 7 shows a flowchart representing an index recording process carried out in execution of an operation to record a TV program on the DVD-RAM 16.
[0049]

The flowchart begins with a step A1 at which, as an operation to record a TV program on the DVD-RAM 16 is started in accordance with a reservation information recorded in the program and index information recording area 16a, the TV-program information read out from the program and index information recording area 16a is recorded as a post-recodring index for the TV program being recorded in the program and index information recording area 16a. The TV-program information includes

the title of the TV program and the genre of the TV program. The genre of a TV program indicates whether the TV program is sport TV program, a drama TV program or a TV program of another type.

[0050]

Then, at the next step A2, the program-recording reservation apparatus records the moving picture of the TV program serving as the subject of recording in the moving-image recording area 16b.

[0051]

Subsequently, at the next step A3, the programrecording reservation apparatus records the recording
date, recording start position and recording duration of
the TV program recorded in the moving-image recording
area 16b in the program and index information recording
area 16a as parts of the post-recording index for the TV
program.

[0052]

In some of the conventional apparatus, the recording date and recording duration of a TV program are found from an internal clock timer and stored in a memory as a post-recording index automatically. In the case of such conventional apparatus, however, the title of the TV program and every performer appearing in the TV program

must each be specified by manually entering a string of characters describing the title and each of the performers, giving rise to a cumbersome work that takes long time to carry out.

[0053]

In accordance with the present invention, on the other hand, data such as the title, performers and skeleton of a TV program is fetched from program information distributed by a broadcasting station 21.

Thus, the data can be recorded without the need to carry out a manual operation. As a result, the operation to record the data as a post-recording index can be carried out with a very high degree of efficiency.

[0054]

In an operation to reproduce post-recording indexes already recorded in the DVD-RAM and make use of the indexes, on the other hand, the DVD-RAM 16 is typically mounted on a disk recording/reproduction unit. Then, the information searching unit 13 searches the post-recording indexes already recorded in the program and index information recording area 16a for program titles to be output to the TV set 10 by way of the picture interface unit 12 and displayed on the TV set 10. The user can then know what TV programs with ease. In addition, the user

makes use of the input unit 14 such as a remote controller or the like to select the title of a desired TV program from the post-recording indexes displayed on the TV set 10. Thus, the user can reproduce the desired TV program from the recording start position included in the post-recording index of the desired TV program.

[0055]

In this way, the user is capable of not only selecting a desired TV program already recorded in the moving-image recording area 16b and reproducing the TV program from the DVD-RAM 16 with ease, but also searching all data recorded as the post-recording indexes for other information. That is to say, the user can display various kinds of information recorded on the DVD-RAM 16 on the TV set 10 and search for a desired one such as a desired performer.

[0056]

In addition, as a link to TV program information, a mark is put on a TV program included in the TV program listing as a TV program that has been recorded on the DVD-RAM 16 or an already recorded TV program is displayed in a color different from those of other TV programs in the table. Thus, the user is capable of easily forming a judgment as to whether or not a TV program has been

recorded on the DVD-RAM 16.

[0057]

[0058]

(Search/Display Function)

Fig. 8 is a block diagram showing the configuration of core units engaged in the function to search the DVD-RAM 16 for necessary information and display the information on the TV set 10.

First of all, information distributed by a broadcasting station 21 as TV program information is recorded on the DVD-RAM 16 mounted on an information recording apparatus installed at a key station 22. When the DVD-RAM 16 is mounted on the program-recording reservation apparatus, TV program information for every channel is displayed on the TV set 10 serving as a monitor as a TV program listing. The user can then select one of a variety of display formats provided for the TV program listing.

[0059]

The most basic display format is the format of the TV program columns of a newspaper or other media. In accordance with this format, broadcasting channels are displayed in the horizontal axis whereas broadcasting times are displayed in the vertical direction. Thus, TV

programs of all genres are displayed in the form of a matrix.

[0060]

The following description explains an embodiment of a table displaying TV programs by classifying the programs by genre so as to allow the user to search the table for a desired TV program of the genre more easily than the above matrix format of a table displaying TV programs of all genres.

[0061]

Fig. 9 is a plurality of diagrams each showing a table displaying broadcasted TV programs of a genre.
[0062]

The genre can be one of movie, sport, drama, music, animation, cooking, news or weather forecast genres to mention a few. As shown in Fig. 9, TV programs of one of the genres are displayed in the form of a table resembling a matrix with broadcasting channels and broadcasting times arranged in respectively the horizontal and vertical directions of the matrix. By displaying a table showing TV programs of the same genre as shown in each of the diagrams of the figure, the user is capable of searching a table displaying TV programs of only a genre of interest for a desired program with ease.

[0063]

Fig. 10 is a plurality of diagrams each showing a table displaying broadcasted TV programs of one of drama sub-genres forming hierarchical categories of the drama genre.

[0064]

To put it concretely, for example, the drama genre is classified into hierarchical categories such as a low-level category, a middle-level category, and a high-level category. Then, instead of displaying TV programs of the drama genre in a table, the TV programs are displayed in a table for one of the hierarchical categories.

[0065]

Typical tables shown in Fig. 10 are a table showing TV programs of the drama genre in the middle-level category including only dramas each having a typical duration of 1 or 2 hours and a table showing TV programs of the drama genre in the low-level category including only dramas of another type after selection of the drama genre. Typical dramas of another type include a modern drama and a samurai drama.

[0066]

By the same token, a low-level menu for the sport genre is provided as a menu allowing the user to select

one of sport types such as baseball, Japanese wrestling and soccer. That is to say, when the user selects the sport genre, a low-level menu for the sport genre is displayed. Then, the user selects a desired sport type from the low-level menu in order to finely display sport TV programs of the desired type.

[0067]

The user acquires or obtains program information distributed by the broadcasting station 21 to information receiving means 32 serving as a key station 22. At that time, the broadcasting station 21 sets a flag in each of the TV programs as a flag indicating the genre of the TV program. When the user selects a desired genre, an information searching means 13a employed in the program-recording reservation apparatus 30 searches the TV program information for TV programs each having a flag indicating the desired genre. A table showing TV programs of the desired genre only is then created as a TV program listing searched for by the information searching means 13a. Thus, the user can then select a TV program from those shown in the TV program listing of the desired genre only.

[0068]

Table creation means 31a is the unit that creates

the table showing TV programs of the desired genre only as a TV program listing searched for by the information searching means 13a. The program table is created in the form of a matrix with broadcasting channels and broadcasting times laid out in respectively the row and column direction of the matrix. The program-recording reservation apparatus 30 then displays the TV program listing on the TV set 10 serving as a monitor. If TV programs of the same genre are further classified into categories such as low-level, middle-level and high-level categories, the flag identifying the genre requires a link for indicating which category the TV program pertains to.

[0069]

Typically, a program-recording reservation

apparatus 30 like the one shown in Fig. 8 adopts a method

for carrying out the operations to search TV program

information for TV programs of interest and display the

TV programs found in the search operation.

[0070]

Fig. 8 is a diagram showing a typical case in which the user acquires or obtains program information distributed by the broadcasting station 21 through the information receiving means 32 functioning as the key

station 22. The broadcasting station 21 distributes detailed data of the TV program information to the information receiving means 32 by adoption of an online distribution method. That is to say, the broadcasting station 21 distributes detailed data of the TV program information to the information receiving means 32 by transmission of electric waves, through the Internet or through a duplex CATV. As an alternative, the broadcasting station 21 may also distribute detailed data of the TV program information to the information receiving means 32 by adoption of an offline distribution method making use of a recording medium such as a CD-ROM, a DVD-ROM or a DVD-RAM.

[0071]

The detailed data of the program information to be used as a base for creating a TV program listing has a very large amount. Thus, storage means having a large storage capacity is required as a memory for storing the data. A memory such as a DVD-RAM 16 is a desirable memory for storing the data. However, an HDD, a semiconductor RAM or an MO can also be used as such the memory.

A flag indicating the genre of a TV program is appended for each of TV programs included in the program

information stored in the DVD-RAM 16 as described earlier. If necessary, the user may want a TV program listing of the same genre as described above. In this case, the user operates the input unit 14 in order to specify a desired genre. The input unit 14 can be a remote controller, a keyboard, a mouse or another input device. The desired genre entered to the input unit 14 is supplied to the information searching means 13a, which then a starts a process to search the TV program information for TV programs of the desired genre.

[0073]

On the basis of the input genre, the information searching means 13a searches the program information recorded in the DVD-RAM 16 for TV programs of the input genre and stores information on the TV programs found in the search process in a recording area included in the DVD-RAM 16 as an area other than area used for storing the TV program information.

[0074]

At a point of time the operation to search the program information recorded in the DVD-RAM 16 for all TV programs of the input genre is completed, the table creation means 31a for creating a TV program listing retrieves information on the TV program from the other

area of the DVD-RAM 16 and creates any of the tables shown in Fig. 9 on the basis of the program information retrieved from the other area. The table creation means 31a then displays the TV program listing of the selected genre on the TV set 10 serving as a monitor.

[0075]

This embodiment is also capable of carrying out the following search operations other then the operation to search the program information recorded in the DVD-RAM 16 for all TV programs of the input genre.

[0076]

operation to search for desired performer acting in a musical TV program or a drama. In this case, the user specifies the name of the desired performer as a keyword to be used in the search operation. When the user wants to carry out an operation to search for TV programs of a desired genre, the user can specify one of genres, the number of which is limited to a certain degree. In this case, since a flag indicating the genre of a TV program has been appended for each of TV programs included in the program information stored in the DVD-RAM 16 as described earlier, on the basis of a flag representing a genre specified by the user, the information searching means

13a is capable of searching the program information recorded in the DVD-RAM 16 for TV programs of the input genre. In the case of a performer name serving as a keyword to be used in a search operation based on the keyword, however, there is a very large number of performers one of which is selected by the user. Thus, it is not realistic to set name flags each representing the name of a performer in the information of TV programs in advance. For this reason, the information searching means 13a searches all person names such as artist names, group names and actor/actress names included in the TV program information for the name of a desired performer in a complete-text search operation.

[0077]

As described above, the broadcasting station 21 distributes data to the program-recording reservation apparatus 30 in a variety of formats as TV program information. In addition to this data, other data described below may also be distributed by the broadcasting station 21 and displayed by the program-recording reservation apparatus 30 on the TV set 10. [0078]

In addition, it is possible to provide a configuration in which a menu besides the program table

showing the TV program information is particularly prepared as a menu to be referred to by the user in searching for data other than the distributed TV program information or displaying the other data on the TV set 10.

[0079]

Data displayed on the TV set 10 as data other than the distributed TV program information can be information on a variety of best tens. Typical best tens are the 10 best broadcasting stations having high program ratings, the 10 most popular musical hit songs, the 10 best rental videos, the 10 best sold CDs and the 10 best cable broadcasts.

[0080]

It is also possible to provide a low-level menu for other data as a menu for selecting more detailed data. In the case of the 10 most popular musical hit songs or the 10 best sold CDs for example, it is also possible to provide a low-level menu for selecting a detailed best ten such as the 10 best albums in Japan, the 10 best albums in the USA, the 10 best pieces of dancing music for each musical genre, the 10 most popular ballads or the 10 best popular songs.

[0081]

In addition, data of a popularity vote expressed by

the audience can also be distributed by the broadcasting station 21 and displayed by the program-recording reservation apparatus 30 on the TV set 10. The data of a popularity vote is generally classified into a popular program category, an actor/actress category, a singer category, a presenter category, a CM category and others. [0082]

The other data is by no means limited to the best tens described above but can also be any one of a large number kinds of data such as a best hundred. For example, with the names of the 100 most popular actors or actresses displayed, the search operation described above is carried out when the name of an actor or an actress is specified by the user as an input.

In addition, information recording means implemented by the embodiment as means for recording TV program information is configured to employ information storage means such as the DVD-RAM 16 having a large storage capacity and record the TV program information on the information storage means. Thus, data of a moving picture or a standstill picture can also be included in the TV program listing.

[0084]

[0083]

For example, a digest version of a movie (or a drama) selected as data classified by program genre can be prepared in a low-level menu. That is to say, with a desired TV program selected from those shown in a displayed TV program listing of the movie (or drama) genre, the user can specify a menu for selecting a digest of the desired TV program. If the digest is a commentary digest including a standstill or moving picture giving a hint as to what contents the selected TV program has, from the digest, the user is capable of identifying the contents of the TV program.

[0085]

In addition, data such as information on a best ten can also be provided with a low-level menu. In the case of the 10 most popular songs for example, the low-level menu can be used by the user to see a digest portion of a singer singing a selected hit song from a moving picture and voice of the singer.

[0086]

In addition, digest data can also be distributed by including the data in TV program information. Examples of such digest data include an advertisement such as PR data of a new drama and a TVCM such as an on-air CM of an enterprise. As described above, it is thus possible to

distribute various kinds of other data by including the data in TV program information in addition to TV-program data itself and make use of the other data as an advertisement tool conveying an advertisement of an enterprise or the like.

[0087]

(Reservation Setting Function)

Fig. 11 is a block diagram showing a configuration of the program-recording reservation apparatus 30 as a configuration used for executing a function to set a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto a recording medium.

[8800]

In the configuration shown in Fig. 11, a program database 16al is stored in program data storage means such as an optical disk, a floppy disk, a hard disk or a semiconductor memory. The program database 16al is program information including a program identifier, a recording start time, a recording end time and a title, which are provided for each TV program. Such TV program information is provided for every channel. The storing program database 16al can be mounted on and dismounted from a system controller 31, which serves as control means of the program-recording reservation apparatus 30

as will be described later, with a high degree of freedom.
[0089]

The system controller 31 is an µpu (microprocessor unit). The µpu retrieves data of TV programs distributed by broadcasting stations 21 from the program database 16a1 and displays the data on the TV set 10, which serves as display means, as a TV program listing.
[0090]

In addition, the system controller 31 is connected to the input unit 14 which includes a mouse or the like to be operated by the user to move a cursor serving as a pointing device to the position of a TV program selected among those included in the program table displayed on the TV set 10 in order to specify the selected TV program. The control to specify a TV program is also executed by the upu of the system controller 31.

In addition, the system controller 31 is also connected to a clock circuit 33. As will be described later, clock data generated by the clock circuit 33 as data expressing the present time is used in a process to make a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto a recording medium.

[0092]

On top of that, the system controller 31 is also connected to a recording/reproduction unit 11 including a disk recording/reproduction section. An example of the recording/reproduction unit 11 is an optical-disk drive which records a specified program on an optical disk in accordance with an instruction received from the system controller 31.

[0093]

In addition, the system controller 31 is also connected to specified-program storage means used for storing a specified-program database 16a2. The specified-program database 16a2 includes data received from the input unit 14 as the data of a TV program specified by the user as a selected TV program. The data of a selected TV program can be displayed on the TV set 10 as the number of a channel through which the TV program is broadcasted, the broadcasting start time of the TV program, the name of a user making a reservation for an operation to record the TV program on the recording medium 16 and the name of a registered user.

[0094]

Next, the operation of the program-recording reservation apparatus 30 having the configuration

described above is explained.
[0095]

Fig. 12 shows a main flowchart representing program-recording reservation processing carried out by the system controller 31 serving as the core unit of the program-recording reservation apparatus 30 shown in Fig. 11.

[0096]

Fig. 13 shows a subroutine flowchart representing date-based program-recording reservation processing called by the aforementioned main flowchart representing the program-recording reservation processing shown in Fig. 11.

[0097]

Fig. 14 shows a subroutine flowchart representing genre-based program-recording reservation processing called by the aforementioned main flowchart representing the program-recording reservation processing shown in Fig. 11.

[0098]

Fig. 15 shows a subroutine flowchart representing child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing called by the aforementioned main flowchart representing the program-recording reservation processing

shown in Fig. 11.

[0099]

Fig. 16 shows a subroutine flowchart representing user specifying processing called by the aforementioned main flowchart representing the program-recording reservation processing shown in Fig. 11.
[0100]

Fig. 17 is a diagram showing a main-menu screen displayed in the course of the program-recording reservation processing.

[0101]

Fig. 18 is a diagram showing a date-based program-recording reservation screen displayed in the course of the program-recording reservation processing.

[0102]

Fig. 19 is a diagram showing a topic screen displayed in the course of the program-recording reservation processing.

[0103]

Fig. 20 is a diagram showing a genre selection screen displayed in the course of the program-recording reservation processing.

[0104]

Fig. 21 is a diagram showing a sport-program

recording reservation screen displayed in the course of the program-recording reservation processing.
[0105]

Fig. 22 is a diagram showing a first screen displayed in the course of the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing performed as a part of the program-recording reservation processing.

[0106]

Fig. 23 is a diagram showing a second screen displayed in the course of the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing performed as a part of the program-recording reservation processing.

[0107]

Fig. 24 is a diagram showing a user registration screen displayed in the course of the user registration processing performed as a part of the program-recording reservation processing.

[0108]

The flowchart shown in Fig. 12 begins with a step B21 when the user selects a program reservation item mentioned before as a menu item.

[0109]

At the step B21, the main-menu screen shown in Fig. 17 is displayed on the TV set 10.

The main-menu screen shows menu items such as a date-based program-recording reservation item 72, a genre-based program-recording reservation item 73, a child-oriented simple program-recording reservation item 74, a user specifying item 75, a registered-user block 71, a date item 76, a select item 77, a cancel item 78 and an end item 79. The items 72 to 75 are displayed as a reservation classification table.

If the user operates the input unit 14 to carry out a click operation after positioning a cursor at a desired item on the screen of the TV set 10, the system controller 31 operates to change the color of the characters describing the item.

[0111]

Then, after the click operation has been carried out to select a menu item pointed to by the cursor, the flowchart of the program-recording reservation processing goes on to a subroutine corresponding to the selected item. The subroutine corresponding to the selected item is the subroutine shown in Fig. 13 as a subroutine representing the date-based program-recording reservation processing, the subroutine shown in Fig. 14 as a subroutine representing genre-based program-recording

reservation processing, the subroutine shown in Fig. 15 as a subroutine representing the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing or the subroutine shown in Fig. 16 as a subroutine representing the user specifying processing.

[0112]

Next, each of the subroutines cited above is explained.

[0113]

<Date-Based Program-Recording Reservation>

When the date-based program-recording reservation item 72 is selected, the program-recording reservation processing goes on to a step B42 at which the system controller 31 creates a TV program listing and displays the TV program listing on the TV set 10 as a program table based on the program database 16alm, the specified-program database 16a2 and data received from the clock circuit 33.

[0114]

The date-based program-recording reservation screen shown in Fig. 18 shows the program table described above, a registered-user block 71, a date item 76, a register item 80, a cancel item 78, a topic item 81 and an end item 79.

[0115]

The TV program listing is displayed in the form of a matrix with broadcasting channels and broadcasting times arranged in respectively the horizontal and vertical directions of the matrix. The horizontal and vertical axes of the TV program listing are each provided with a scroll bar. By moving the scroll pointers k1 and k2, it is possible to display a TV program, which is currently not seen on the TV set 10, on the TV set 10. [0116]

In the displayed TV program listing, the ground color of the block of a TV program which is to be recorded in accordance with an already made reservation is changed to a color specified by the user. On the other hand, the display of the block of a TV program which has already been recorded in accordance with a reservation is changed to a color other than the color specified by the user.

[0117]

In addition, at the step B42 of the flowchart shown in Fig. 13 as a flowchart representing the date-based program-recording reservation processing, when the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the

block of a desired TV program and carry out a click operation, the system controller 31 operates to change the color of the frame of the block to another color specified by the user.

[0118]

Then, when the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the register item and carry out a click operation, the system controller 31 operates to change the ground color of the block of the selected TV program to another color specified by the user.

[0119]

In addition, if it is desired to make a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto a recording medium not from the start of the program, the user needs to operate the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the recording-time changing block 82 and change the recording time.

[0120]

If the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the cancel item 78 and carry out a click operation, the reservation for an operation to record a

TV program onto a recording medium shown in a block with the frame thereof having a changed color is cancelled.
[0121]

In addition, if the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the topic item 81 and carry out a click operation with the color of the frame of a block enclosing a TV program already changed to indicate that the program has been selected, the system controller 31 displays the topic screen shown in Fig. 19 on the TV set 10 in place of the date-based program-recording reservation screen shown in Fig. 18. As shown in Fig. 19, the topic screen shows information such as the title of the selected TV program, a brief description of the contents of the TV program, persons appearing in the TV program and highlights of the TV program. It is to be noted that instead of displaying the topic screen shown in Fig. 19 on the TV set 10 in place of the date-based program-recording reservation screen shown in Fig. 18, the system controller 31 may also display the topic screen on the TV set 10 by superposing the topic screen on the date-based program-recording reservation screen. [0122]

After viewing necessary information displayed on

the topic screen shown in Fig. 19, the user needs to operate the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the end item 79 on the topic screen and carry out a click operation. In this case, the date-based program-recording reservation screen shown in Fig. 18 is displayed again on the TV set 10 and the system controller 31 enters a state of waiting for an input to be entered via the input unit 14.

[0123]

After necessary operations have been carried out on the date-based program-recording reservation screen shown in Fig. 18 as described above, the user needs to operate the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the end item 79 on the date-based program-recording reservation screen and carry out a click operation, ending the process to make a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto a recording medium. As the process to make a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto a recording medium is ended, data entered by the user in the course of the process as the data of a selected TV program is stored in the specified-program database 16a2. Then, the program-recording reservation processing

carried out by the program-recording reservation apparatus 30 goes back to the step B21 of the flowchart shown in Fig. 12 to display the main-menu screen shown in Fig. 17 as a table showing a variety of program-recording reservation items.

[0124]

If the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the end item 79 on the main-menu screen and carry out a click operation, the program-recording reservation processing is ended in accordance with a determination result produced at a step B27.

[0125]

<Genre-Based Program-Recording Reservation>

When the genre-based program-recording reservation item 73 is selected, the system controller 31 carries out the genre-based program-recording reservation processing represented by the flowchart shown in Fig. 14. In the genre-based program-recording reservation processing, the system controller 31 reads out the program database 16a1, the specified-program database 16a2 and the data received from the clock circuit 33. In the genre-based program-recording reservation processing, first of all, the genre selection screen shown in Fig. 20 is displayed on the TV

set 10.

[0126]

As shown in Fig. 20, the genre selection screen displays a matrix of genre items, a date item 76, a topic item 81 and an end item 79. Typical genre items are movie, animation, drama, leisure, quiz, news, animal and nature items. The horizontal and vertical axes of the matrix of genre items are each provided with a scroll bar. By moving the scroll pointers k1 and k2, it is possible to display a genre item, which is currently not seen on the TV set 10, on the TV set 10.

When the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the block of a desired genre item and carry out a click operation, the system controller 31 operates to change the color of the ground of the block to another color specified by the user. Then, when the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the selected genre and carry out a click operation again to confirm the selection of the desired genre, the system controller 31 displays a screen like the one shown in Fig. 21 as a screen showing TV programs of the genre (in this case, selected genre is sports).

[0127]

As described above, the screen shown in Fig. 21 as the sport-program recording reservation screen used for making a reservation for an operation to record a TV program of the sport genre selected by the user onto a recording medium. The sport-program recording reservation screen shows a matrix of TV programs of the sport genre, a registered-user block 71, a date item 76, a register item 80, a cancel item 78, a topic item 81, a recordingtime changing block 82 and an end item 79.

[0128]

The horizontal and vertical axes of the matrix of TV programs are each provided with a scroll bar. horizontal axis represents the sport genre which includes baseball, soccer and Japanese-wrestling genres and the vertical axis represents the broadcasting time. By moving the scroll pointers, it is possible to display a TV program, which is currently not seen on the TV set 10, on the TV set 10.

In the displayed TV program listing, the ground color of the block of a TV program which is to be recorded in accordance with an already made reservation is changed to a color specified by the user. On the other hand, the color of the display of the block of a TV

program which has already been broadcasted or recorded in accordance with a reservation is changed to a color other than the color specified by the user.

[0129]

In addition, at the step B52 of the flowchart shown in Fig. 14 as a flowchart representing the genre-based program-recording reservation processing, when the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the block of a desired TV program and carry out a click operation, the system controller 31 operates to change the color of the frame of the block to another color specified by the user in order to indicate that the TV program has been selected.

Then, when the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the register item and carry out a click operation, the system controller 31 operates to change the ground color of the block of the selected TV program to another color specified by the user to indicate that the reservation for an operation to record the selected TV program on the recording medium 16 has been completed.

[0130]

In addition, if it is desired to make a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto the recording medium 16 not from the start of the program, the user needs to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the recording-time changing block 82 and operate the input unit 14 in order to change the recording time.

[0131]

If the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the cancel item 78 and carry out a click operation, the reservation for an operation to record a TV program shown in a block with the frame thereof having a changed color onto a recording medium is cancelled.

[0132]

In addition, if the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the topic item 81 and carry out a click operation with the color of the frame of a block enclosing a TV program already changed to indicate that the program has been selected, the system controller 31 displays the topic screen shown in Fig. 19 on the TV set 10 in place of the genre-based program-recording reservation screen shown in Fig. 21. As shown in Fig. 19,

the topic screen shows information such as the title of the selected TV program, a brief description of the contents of the TV program, persons appearing in the TV program and highlights of the TV program.

[0133]

After viewing necessary information displayed on the topic screen shown in Fig. 19, the user needs to operate the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the end item 79 on the topic screen and carry out a click operation. In this case, the program-recording reservation processing goes back to the genre-based program-recording reservation screen shown in Fig. 21 and the system controller 31 enters a state of waiting for an input to be entered via the input unit 14.

[0134]

After necessary operations have been carried out on the genre-based program-recording reservation screen shown in Fig. 21 as described above, the user needs to operate the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the end item 79 on the genre-based program-recording reservation screen and carry out a click operation, ending the process to make a reservation for an operation

to record a TV program onto a recording medium. As the process to make a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto a recording medium is ended, data entered by the user in the course of the process as the data of a selected TV program is stored in specified-program database 16a2. Then, the program-recording reservation processing carried out by the program-recording recording reservation apparatus 30 goes back to the step B51 at which the genre-based program-recording reservation screen shown in Fig. 20 is displayed again. [0135]

If the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the end item 79 on the genre-based program-recording reservation screen and carry out a click operation, the program-recording reservation processing goes back to the step B21 of the flowchart shown in Fig. 12 and the main-menu screen shown in Fig. 17 is displayed again as a table showing a variety of program-recording reservation items. If the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the end item 79 on the main-menu screen shown in Fig. 17, the program-recording reservation processing is ended in accordance with a

determination result produced at the step B27.
[0136]

<Child-Oriented Simple Program-Recording Reservation>

When the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation item 74 on the main-menu screen shown in Fig. 17 is selected, the system controller 31 executes the subroutine shown in Fig. 15 as the subroutine representing the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing. In the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing, the system controller 31 reads out the program database 16a1, the specified-program database 16a2 and data received from the clock circuit 33. In the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing, first of all, the first screen shown in Fig. 22 as a screen output in the course of the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing is displayed on the TV set 10. As shown in Fig. 22, the first screen output by the childoriented simple program-recording reservation processing displays a matrix of genre items expressed in terms of hiragana characters, katakana characters or pictures. The genre items include animation, animal, sport, music and movie items. In addition, the first screen also displays a date item 76, an O circle item 83, an X cross item 84

and a hand mark item 85.

The O circle item 83 is used for confirming selection of a genre whereas the X cross item 84 is equivalent to the cancel item 78. The hand mark item 85 is equivalent to the end item 79.

The horizontal and vertical axes of the matrix of genre items are each provided with a scroll bar. It is possible to display a genre item, which is currently not seen on the TV set 10, on the TV set 10.

When the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the block of a desired genre and carry out a click operation, the system controller 31 operates to change the ground color of the block to another color specified by the user so as to indicate that the desired genre has been selected. Then, when the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the 0 circle item used for executing the selection of a genre and carry out a click operation, the system controller 31 displays a screen like the one shown in Fig. 23 on the TV set 10 as the second screen showing TV programs of the selected

genre. The second screen of the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing displays 1 cut of each of the TV programs. The screen shown in Fig. 23 as the second screen of the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing is a screen obtained as a result of selecting the animation-genre item from those shown on the first screen shown in Fig. 22. The screen shown in Fig. 23 as the second screen of the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing displays a matrix of TV program cuts, a date item 76, an O circle item 83, an X cross item 84 and a hand mark item 85.

The horizontal and vertical axes of the matrix of TV program cuts are each provided with a scroll bar. It is possible to display a TV program cut, which is currently not seen on the TV set 10, on the TV set 10.

[0139]

In the displayed matrix of TV program cuts, the ground color of the block showing a cut of a TV program which is to be recorded in accordance with an already made reservation is changed to a color specified by the user. On the other hand, the display of the block showing a cut of a TV program which has already been broadcasted or recorded in accordance with a reservation is changed

to a color other than the color specified by the user. [0140]

In addition, at a step B62 of the flowchart shown in Fig. 15 as a flowchart representing the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing, when the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the block of a desired program cut and carry out a click operation, the system controller 31 operates to change the color of the frame of the block to another color specified by the user.

Then, when the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the O circle item 83 on the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation screen and carry out a click operation to confirm the selection of the TV program cut, the system controller 31 operates to change the ground color of the block of the selected TV program to another color specified by the user to indicate that the reservation for an operation to record the selected TV program onto the recording medium 16 has been completed.

[0141]

If the user operates the input unit 14 in order to

move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the X cross item 84 and carry out a click operation, the reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto a recording medium shown in a block with the frame thereof having a changed color is cancelled. [0142]

After necessary operations have been carried out on the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation screen as described above, the user needs to operate the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the hand mark item 85 on the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation screen and carry out a click operation, ending the process to make a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto a recording medium and data entered by the user in the course of the process as the data of a selected TV program is stored in specifiedprogram database 16a2. Then, the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation goes back to the first step B61 at which the first screen shown in Fig. 22 is displayed again on the TV set 10. As shown in Fig. 22, the first screen output by the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing displays a matrix of genre items expressed in terms of hiragana

characters, katakana characters or pictures. If the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the hand mark item 85 on the screen displayed on the TV set 10 as the first screen of the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing and carry out a click operation, the program-recording reservation processing carried out by the program-recording reservation apparatus 30 goes back to the step B21 of the flowchart shown in Fig. 12 to display the main-menu screen shown in Fig. 17 as a table showing a variety of program-recording reservation items. If the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the end item 79 on the main-menu screen and carry out a click operation, the program-recording reservation processing is ended in accordance with a determination result produced at the step B27.

[0143]

<Specifying a User>

If the user specifying item 75 on the main-menu screen shown in Fig. 17 is selected, the system controller 31 executes a user specifying subroutine shown in Fig. 16. In the user specifying subroutine, the system

controller 31 reads out the specified-program database 16a2 and searches the specified-program database 16a2 for user data to be used for displaying a user-table display screen like the screen shown in Fig. 24 on the TV set 10. As shown in the figure, the user-table display screen shows a user listing, a register item 80, a user specifying item 86, a delete item 87 and an end item 79. The user listing shows the name of each user and a color assigned to every user.

[0144]

The vertical axis of the user listing is provided with a scroll bar. It is possible to display the attributes of a user (that is, the names and the colors), which are currently not seen on the TV set 10, on the TV set 10.

When the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the block of a user and carry out a click operation in a process to register a new user or edit the attributes of an already registered user, the system controller 31 operates to change the color of the frame of the block to another color specified by the user. In a process to register a new user, first of all, the user operates the input unit 14 in order to enter the name and

color of the user. A name and a color, which are entered in a process to register a new user or edit the attributes of an already registered user, are stored in the specified-program database 16a2 in order to update the specified-program database 16a2.

In an edit process to change the attributes of an already registered user, on the other hand, the user needs to operate the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the block of the user and carry out a click operation. In this case, the system controller 31 operates to change the color of the frame of the block. Then, the user needs to operate the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the user specifying item 86 and carry out a click operation. At that time, the system controller 31 operates to change the ground color of the frame of the block to indicate the attributes have been registered.

[0146]

When the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the cancel item 87 and carry out a click operation, a selected user is deregistered.

[0147]

When the operations carried out to register a new user, change the attributes of an already registered user or deregister an already registered user have been completed, the user needs to operate the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the end item 79 and carry out a click operation. At that time, the specified-program database 16a2 is updated to reflect a result of the operations. Then, the program-recording reservation processing carried out by the program-recording reservation apparatus 30 goes back to the step B21 of the flowchart shown in Fig. 12 to display the main-menu screen shown in Fig. 17 as a table showing a variety of program-recording reservation items. If the user operates the input unit 14 in order to move the cursor over the screen of the TV set 10 to the position of the end item 79 on the main-menu screen and carry out a click operation, the programrecording reservation processing is ended in accordance with a determination result produced at the step B27. [0148]

As described above, the user needs only to carry out simple operations in order to make a program-recording reservation on the program-recording

reservation apparatus 30. In addition, by registering users, one unit of the program-recording reservation apparatus 30 can be used by a plurality of users. Even if one unit of the program-recording reservation apparatus 30 is used by a plurality of users, it is possible to clearly determine a user entering information on a program-recording reservation to the program-recording reservation apparatus 30. As a result, it is possible to prevent a reservation made by another user from being inadvertently cancelled and prevent a plurality of users from making a reservation for an operation to record the same TV program onto a recording medium 16.

[0149]

[0150]

(Edit Function)

In an operation to edit information already recorded on the DVD-RAM 16 shown in Fig. 5 as a memory used for storing moving and standstill pictures, means making use of indexes shown in Fig. 6 is effective means. Information that can be edited includes genres used for classifying TV programs, types of TV programs, titles of TV programs, synopses of TV programs, recording dates and recording durations of TV programs.

Fig. 25 is a diagram showing a screen displaying

menus classified by genre as menus used by the user to edit TV-program recording information stored in the DVD-RAM 16.

[0151]

Fig. 26 is a diagram showing a screen displaying menus classified by sport sub-genre as menus which result when the user selects a menu of the sport genre among menus displayed on the screen shown in Fig. 25.

[0152]

Fig. 27 is a diagram showing a screen output in a process to update information on recordings of TV programs as a screen displaying details of contents of a program.

[0153]

To put it in detail, when the user inserts the DVD-RAM 16 into a picture outputting apparatus provided with an edit function, the apparatus automatically displays information on the TV set 10 serving as a display apparatus as shown in Fig. 25. An example of the displayed information is titles of all recorded TV programs classified by genre. As shown in the figure, the recorded TV programs are classified into categories corresponding to the movie, sport, music, animation, cooking, news, weather forecast and drama genres. The

user then operates the input unit 14 such as a mouse, a keyboard and/or a remote controller in order to select the title of any desired TV program of any specific genre of interest and carries out a drag or click operation in order to copy the selected title to an edit column 88 on the screen of the TV set 10 in the so-called desired edit operation.

[0154]

In addition, the menu display screen shown in Fig. 25 can be used as a screen pertaining to a hierarchical structure. In this case, the user selects a desired genre from genres displayed on the screen. For example, when the user selects the sport genre, a screen displaying menus classified by sport sub-genre is displayed on the TV set 10 as shown in Fig. 26. As shown in the figure, the menu for TV programs of the sport genre is further divided into sub-menus corresponding to the basket, baseball, tennis, golf and other sub-genres which are each a low-level sub-genre of the sport genre.

In addition, the user can further display details of information on a selected TV program on a screen like the one shown in Fig. 27. In the case of a TV program of the drama genre for example, details of the TV program

include a synopsis of the drama, performers appearing in the drama, the recording date, the recording duration and the number of the channel broadcasting the TV program.

In the case of either the screen shown in Fig. 25 or the screen shown in Fig. 26, the user can operate the input unit 14 such as a mouse, a keyboard and/or a remote controller in order to select the title or number of a moving or standstill picture to be edited and store the moving or standstill picture on the same DVD-RAM 16 or another recording medium for an editing purpose.

[0156]

In a typical edit process, the user operates the input unit 14 such as a mouse in order to select the title of any desired TV program of any specific genre of interest and carries out a drag or click operation by making use of the mouse in order to copy the selected title to an edit column 88 on the screen shown in Fig. 25 or the screen shown in Fig. 26. Then, the user selects the edit item 89 in order to edit information on recording of TV programs for later reproduction in the order they have been copied to the edit column 88.

The DVD-RAM 16 is a desirable recording medium used for storing various kinds of information as described

above. However, the recording medium used for storing various kinds of information is by no means limited to the DVD-RAM 16. For example, the recording medium used for storing various kinds of information can also be an HDD, a PD, an MO or another recording medium.

[0158]

In addition, also as shown in Fig. 2, besides information broadcasted by the broadcasting station 21, information distributed to the broadcasting station 21 installed at a place such as a convenience store, a bookstore or a kiosk in a train station can also usually be recorded on the DVD-RAM 16 as the program and index information. The information distributed to the broadcasting station 21 typically includes a synopsis of a TV program, a preannouncement of a TV program and profiles of performers appearing in a TV program. Also as explained in the section describing the search/display function as well as the section describing the reservation setting function, by reproducing the information from the DVD-RAM 16, the user can easily grasp the contents of a TV program recorded on the DVD-RAM 16 at a glance.

[0159]

A result of an editing process can also be recorded

on the same disk as the disk used for recording the subject of the editing process provided that the disk has a large storage capacity as the DVD-RAM 16 has. If the editing process is carried out by making use of a picture recording/reproduction output apparatus allowing a plurality of disks to be mounted thereon at the same time, however, the result of the editing process can be recorded on a disk other than the disk used for storing the subject of the editing process.

[0160]

In this case, a disk is provided for each genre such as the movie, music or drama genre. Thus, a drama series can be recorded collectively on a disk provided specially for the series.

[0161]

It is to be noted that, in an editing process in which a result of an editing process is recorded on the same disk as the disk used for recording the subject of the editing process, a portion of the index information recording area 16a shown in Fig. 5 is used for storing the post-recording index of a TV program to be edited. As shown in Fig. 6, the post-recording index of a TV program includes the start address of the actual picture recording area of the TV program.

[0162]

If the result of an editing process is recorded on a disk other than the disk used for storing the subject of the editing process, on the other hand, both the post-recording index of the edited TV program such as a moving picture and the TV program itself are transferred to the other disk to be recorded thereon.

[0163]

a certain disk and the disk is inserted into a picture outputting apparatus, the post-recording indexes included in the edited recording information are automatically displayed on a display unit such as a TV. In this case, the post-recording indexes are naturally displayed in a hierarchical structure allowing details of attributes of every TV program to be searched with ease. The attributes of a TV program include a synopsis of the program and performers appearing therein. That is to say, as described earlier, the user can operate the input unit 14 such as a remote controller, a mouse and/or a keyboard in order to select a desired TV program from a menu of interest and reproduce the desired program with ease.

Thus, it is not only possible to display a program

table and various kinds of information such as program contents in any format on the basis of program information, which has been distributed by a broadcasting station 21 and recorded in advance on a recording medium 16 such as a DVD-RAM, but also possible to directly specify a desired TV program shown in the program table in order to make a reservation for an operation to record the desired program onto a recording medium 16 and possible to manage reservation information by associating the reservation information with a post-recording index stored in the program and index information recording area 16a as the program information of the specified program. In addition, in an operation to actually record a specified TV program onto the recording medium in accordance with the reservation information, it is also possible to record the moving picture of the program in the moving-image recording area 16b as well as to attach additional data such as a recording date, a recording start position and a recording duration to the postrecording index stored in the program and index information recording area 16a as the program information of the specified program in management of post-recording indexes. Thus, by carrying out simple operations, it is possible to search the recording medium 16 for TV program

information, display the information found in the search process, make a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto the recording medium 16 and performing an edit process to mention a few. On top of that, it becomes possible to immediately obtain other information such as the contents of a TV program and the profiles of performers acting in the TV program as information that cannot be known by merely referring to TV program columns of a newspaper or a magazine.

[0165]

[Effects of the Invention]

As described above, a recording medium used for recording TV program information in accordance with claim 1 already contains program information including at least the number of a channel through which a TV program is broadcasted, the title of the TV program, the broadcasting date of the TV program, the broadcasting start time of the TV program and the broadcasting end time of the TV program for every TV program broadcasted through a channel and for every channel. Thus, by mounting the optical disk on a reproduction apparatus, the disk can be searched for information on a desired TV program instantly and the program found in the search process can be displayed immediately.

[0166]

It is thus possible to quickly search for and view various kinds of TV program information.

In addition, an information recording apparatus according to claim 2 is installed in a key station, at which the user can stop by with ease, as an information recording apparatus for acquiring program information including at least the number of a channel through which a TV program is broadcasted, the title of the TV program, the broadcasting date of the TV program, the broadcasting start time of the TV program and the broadcasting end time of the TV program and storing the program information in a memory for every TV program broadcasted through a channel and for every channel. The information recording apparatus acquires the program information and records the information into a recording medium carried by the user. Examples of the recording medium carried by the user include a compact and rewritable optical disk, a compact and rewritable magnetic disk and a compact and rewritable magneto-optical disk, which are each used as a DVD-RAM, a removable HDD or an MO. Then, on the basis of the program information recorded on the recording medium carried by the user, the user is capable of easily making a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program onto a recording medium. The user may not carry such a recording medium. In this case, the information recording apparatus records the program information on a new recording medium such as a CD-ROM which is not rewritable and the new recording medium can be sold to the user. Then, on the basis of the program information recorded on the purchased recording medium carried, the user is also capable of easily making a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program onto a recording medium in the same way.

[0168]

That is to say, the program-recording reservation apparatus claimed by claim 3 as a program-recording reservation apparatus making use of a recording medium used for storing program information reads out program information including at least the number of a channel through which a TV program is broadcasted, the title of the TV program, the broadcasting date of the TV program, the broadcasting start time of the TV program and the broadcasting end time of the TV program for every TV program broadcasted through a channel and for every channel from a recording medium such as an optical disk used for storing the program information in advance,

displaying the program information on the display means and sets a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto the recording medium on the basis of the program information displayed on the display means. Thus, the program information including at least a channel number, a program title, a broadcasting date as well as recording start and end times for a desired TV program can be set as reservation information for an operation to record the desired TV program on the recording medium as it is.

[0169]

Thus, the user can make a reservation for an operation to record a desired TV program onto a recording medium with ease and with a high degree of accuracy without the need to refer to a newspaper, a TV magazine or other media.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing the configuration of a program-recording reservation apparatus according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[Fig. 2]

[Fig. 1]

Fig. 2 is a diagram showing a route for obtaining

TV program information for a case in which a DVD (digital

video disk) - RAM is used as a recording medium to be mounted on a disk reproduction unit employed in the program-recording reservation apparatus; for an operation to record the desired TV program on the recording medium.

[Fig. 3]

Fig. 3 is a diagram showing a typical data format of program information distributed by a broadcasting station.

[Fig. 4]

Fig. 4 is a diagram showing the recording state of information recorded on a recording medium mounted on the disk reproduction unit employed in the program-recording reservation apparatus as information on each TV program for every channel.

[Fig. 5]

Fig. 5 is a diagram showing designation of areas on the DVD-RAM as information recording areas.

[Fig. 6]

Fig. 6 shows a table showing typical post-recording indexes recorded in a program and index information recording area of the DVD-RAM.

[Fig. 7]

Fig. 7 shows a flowchart representing an index recording process carried out in execution of an

operation to record a TV program on the DVD-RAM.

[Fig. 8]

Fig. 8 is a block diagram showing the configuration of core units engaged in a function to search the DVD-RAM for necessary information and display the information on a display unit.

[Fiq. 9]

Fig. 9 is a plurality of diagrams each showing a table displaying broadcasted TV programs of a genre.

[Fig. 10]

Fig. 10 is a plurality of diagrams each showing a table displaying broadcasted TV programs of one of subgenres, which are each further finely classified into hierarchical categories.

[Fig. 11]

Fig. 11 is a block diagram showing a configuration of the program-recording reservation apparatus as a configuration used for executing a function to set a reservation for an operation to record a TV program onto a recording medium.

[Fig. 12]

Fig. 12 shows a main flowchart representing program-recording reservation processing carried out by a system controller serving as the core unit of the

program-recording reservation apparatus shown in Fig. 11 [Fig. 13]

Fig. 13 shows a subroutine flowchart as a subroutine representing date-based program-recording reservation processing.

[Fig. 14]

Fig. 14 shows a subroutine flowchart as a subroutine representing genre-based program-recording reservation processing.

[Fig. 15]

Fig. 15 shows a subroutine flowchart as a subroutine representing child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing.

[Fig. 16]

[Fig. 17]

Fig. 16 shows a subroutine flowchart as a subroutine representing user specifying processing.

Fig. 17 is a diagram showing a main-menu screen displayed in the course of the program-recording reservation processing carried out by the program-recording reservation apparatus.

[Fig. 18]

Fig. 18 is a diagram showing a date-based programrecording reservation screen displayed in the course of the program-recording reservation processing carried out by the program-recording reservation apparatus. [Fig. 19]

Fig. 19 is a diagram showing a topic screen displayed in the course of the program-recording reservation processing carried out by the program-recording reservation apparatus.

[Fig. 20]

Fig. 20 is a diagram showing a genre selection screen displayed in the course of the program-recording reservation processing carried out by the program-recording reservation apparatus.

[Fig. 21]

Fig. 21 is a diagram showing a sport-program recording reservation screen displayed in the course of the program-recording reservation processing carried out by the program-recording reservation apparatus.

[Fig. 22]

Fig. 22 is a diagram showing a first screen displayed in the course of the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing performed as a part of the program-recording reservation processing carried out by the program-recording reservation apparatus.

[Fig. 23]

Fig. 23 is a diagram showing a second screen displayed in the course of the child-oriented simple program-recording reservation processing performed as a part of the program-recording reservation processing carried out by the program-recording reservation apparatus.

[Fig. 24]

Fig. 24 is a diagram showing a user registration screen displayed in the course of user registration processing performed as a part of the program-recording reservation processing carried out by the program-recording reservation apparatus.

[Fig. 25]

Fig. 25 is a diagram showing a screen displaying menus classified by genre as menus used by the user to edit TV-program recording information stored in the DVD-RAM.

[Fig. 26]

Fig. 26 is a diagram showing a screen displaying menus classified by sport sub-genre as menus which result when the user selects a menu of the sport genre among menus displayed on the screen shown in Fig. 25.

[Fig. 27]

Fig. 27 is a diagram showing a screen output in a process to update information on recordings of TV programs as a screen displaying details of contents of a program.

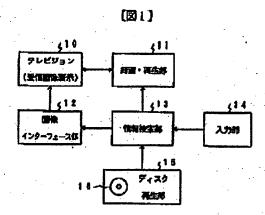
[Description of Reference Symbols]

- 10: ... TV (Monitor or display unit)
- 11: ... Recording/reproduction unit
- 12: ... Picture interface unit
- 13: ... Information searching unit
- 13a: ... Flag searching means
- 14: ... Input unit (input section)
- 15: ... Disk reproduction unit
- 16: ... Recording medium (DVD-RAM)
- 16a: ... Program and index information recording area
- 16a1: ... Program database
- 16a2: ... Specified-program database
- 16b: ... Moving-picture recording area
- 21: ... Broadcasting station
- 22: ... Key station
- 30: ... Program-recording reservation apparatus
- 31: ... System controller
- 31a: ... Table creation means
- 32: ... Information receiving means
- 33: ... Clock circuit

- 34: ... Storage unit
- 71: ... Registered-user block
- 72: ... Date-based reservation item
- 73: ... Genre-based reservation item
- 74: ... Child-oriented simple reservation item
- 75: ... User specifying item
- 76: ... Date item
- 77: ... Select item
- 78: ... Cancel item
- 79: ... End item
- 80: ... Register item
- 81: ... Topics item
- 82: ... Recording-time changing block
- 83: ... O item
- 84: ... X item
- 85: ... Hand mark item
- 86: ... User specifying button
- 87: ... Delete item
- 88: ... Edit area
- 89: ... Edit item

In the drawings:

[Fig. 1]



10: TV (Received-picture display unit)

11: Recording/reproduction unit

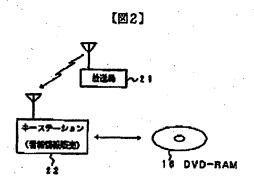
12: Picture interface unit

13: Information searching unit

14: Input unit

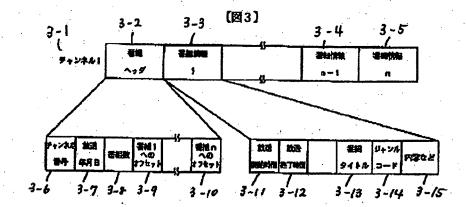
15: Disk reproduction unit

[Fig. 2]



- 21: Broadcasting station
- 22: Key station (Program information seller)

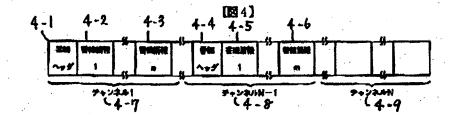
[Fig. 3]



- 3-1: Channel 1
- 3-2: Program header
- 3-3: Program information 1
- 3-4: Program information n-1
- 3-5: Program information n
- 3-6: Channel number
- 3-7: Broadcasting date
- 3-8: Program count
- 3-9: Offset to program 1
- 3-10: Offset to program n
- 3-11: Broadcasting start time
- 3-12: Broadcasting end time
- 3-13: Program title

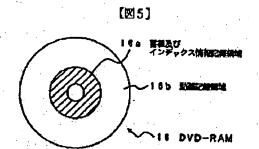
- 3-14: Genre code
- 3-15: Contents etc.

[Fig. 4]



- 4-1: Program header
- 4-2: Program information 1
- 4-3: Program information n
- 4-4: Program header
- 4-5: Program information 1
- 4-6: Program information m
- 4-7: Channel 1
- 4-8: Channel N-1
- 4-9: Channel N

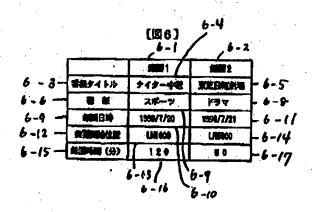
[Fig. 5]



16a: Program and index information recording area

16b: Moving-picture recording area

[Fig. 6]



6-1: Recording 1

6-2: Recording 2

6-3: Program title

6-4: Night Game Broadcast

6-5: Toshiba Sunday Theater

6-6:Genre

6-7: Sport

6-8: Drama

6-9:Recording date

6-10: 1996/7/20

6-11: 1996/7/21

6-12: Recording start position

6-13: LN1000

6-14: LN5000

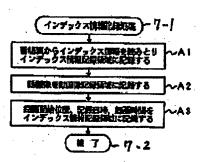
6-15: Recording duration (minutes)

6-16: 120

6-17: 80

[Fig. 7]

【図7】



7-1: Index recording processing

A1: Read out index from program table and record index in program and index information recording area

A2: Record moving picture in moving-picture recording area

A3: Record recording start position, recording date and recording duration in program and index information

recording area

7-2: End

[Fig. 8]

【8図】

21: Broadcasting station

32: Information acquiring means

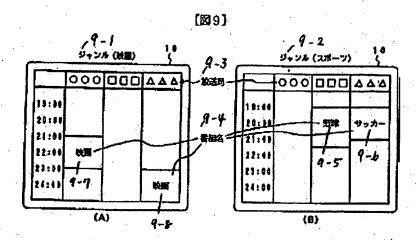
31a: Table creation means

10: TV monitor

13a: Flag searching means

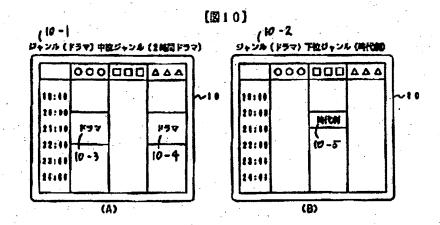
14: Input device

[Fig. 9]



- 9-1: Genre (Movie)
- 9-2: Genre (Sport)
- 9-3: Broadcasting station
- 9-4: Program title
- 9-5: Baseball
- 9-6: Soccer
- 9-7: Movie
- 9-8: Movie

[Fig. 10]



10-1: Middle-level genre (2-hour drama) of the drama genre

10-2: Low-level sub-genre (samurai drama) of the drama genre

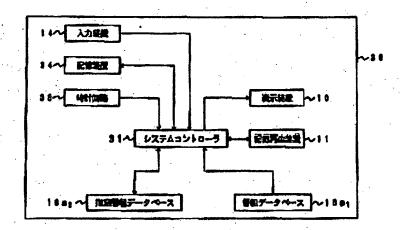
10-3: Drama

10-4: Drama

10-5: Samurai drama

[Fig. 11]

[図11]



14: Input unit

34: Storage unit

33: Clock circuit

10: Display unit

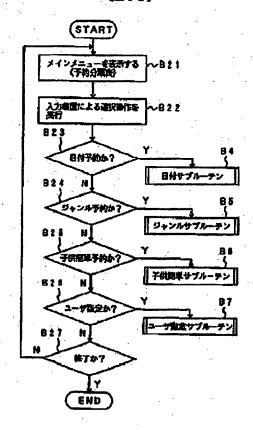
31: System controller

11: Recording/reproduction unit

16a2: Specified-program database

16a1: Program database

[図12].



B21: Display main menu (reservation-item table)

B22: Let user select reservation item by using input unit

B23: Date-based reservation?

B4: Date-based subroutine

B24: Genre-based reservation?

B5: Genre-based subroutine

B25: Child-oriented simple reservation?

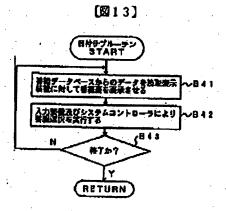
B6: Child-oriented simple subroutine

B26: User specifying item?

B7: User specifying subroutine

B27: End?

[Fig. 13]



13-1: Date-based subroutine START

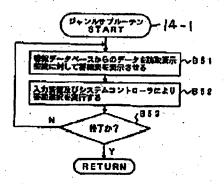
B41: Display program table based on data retrieved from program database on display unit

B42: Let user select program by using input unit and let system controller process selected program

B43: End?

[Fig. 14]

[图14]



14-1: Genre-based subroutine START

B51: Display program table based on data retrieved from program database on display unit

B52: Let user select program by using input unit and let system controller process selected program

B53: End?

(RETURN)

15-1: Child-oriented simple subroutine START

B61: Display genres based on data retrieved from program database on display unit in terms of pictures or animations

B62: Let user select genre by using input unit and let system controller process selected genre

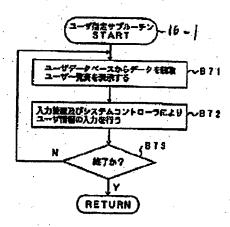
B63: Display program table based on data retrieved from program database on display unit

B64: Let user select program by using input unit and let system controller process selected program

B65: End?

[Fig. 16]

[图16]



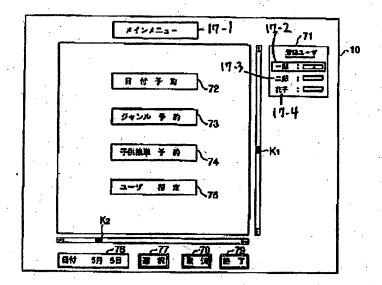
16-1: User specifying subroutine START

B71: Display program table based on data retrieved from program database on display unit

B72: Let user select program by using input unit and let system controller process selected program

B73: End?

【图17】



17-1: Main menu

71: Registered users

17-2: Ichiro

17-3: Jiro

17-4: Hanako

72: Date-based reservation

73: Genre-based reservation

74: Child-oriented simple reservation

75: User specification

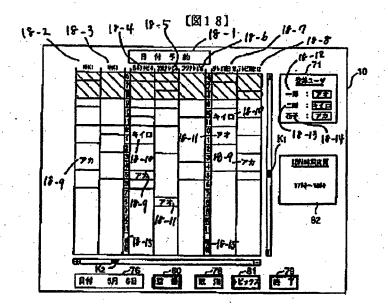
76: Date: May 5

77: Select

78: Cancel

79: End

[Fig. 18]



18-1: Date-based reservation

18-2: NHK 1

18-3: NHK 3

18-4: Japan TV 4

18-5: TBS TV 6

18-6: Fuji TV 8

18-7: Asahi TV 10

18-8: Tokyo TV 12

18-9: Red

18-10: Yellow

18-11: Blue

71: Registered users

18-12 Ichiro: Blue

18-13: Jiro: Yellow

18-14: Hanako: Red

82: Changing recording time

17:00 to 18:00

76: Date: May 5

80: Register

78: Cancel

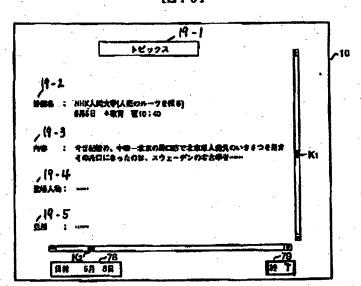
79: End

81: Topic

18-15: Tomorrow Morning

[Fig. 19]

(図19]



19-1: Topics

19-2: Program title:

NHK People University (Searching for Man Root)
May 5 Education program 10:40 PM

19-3: Contents:

A prehistory regarding a discovery of Peking early people at a location in Peking, China at the beginning of this century is introduced. The clue to this prehistorical question was provided by a Swedish archaeologist.

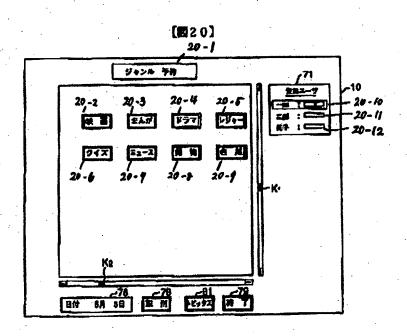
19-4: Program persona:

19-5: Highlights:

76: Date: May 5

79: End

[Fig. 20]



20-1: Genre selection

20-2: Movie

20-3: Animation

20-4: Drama

20-5: Leisure

20-6: Quiz

20-7: News

20-8: Animal

20-9: Nature

71: Registered users

20-10: Ichiro

20-11: Jiro

20-12: Hanako

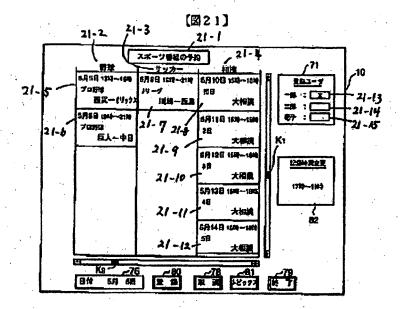
76: Date: May 5

78: Cancel

79: End

81: Topic

[Fig. 21]



21-1: Reservation for recording of a sport program

21-2: Baseball

21-3: Soccer

21-4: Japanese wrestling

21-5: May 5 13:00 to 15:00

Professional baseball

Seibu versus Orix

21-6: May 5 19:00 to 21:00

Professional baseball

Giant versus Chuunichi

21-7: May 6 19:00 to 21:00

J league

Kawasaki versus Kajima

21-8: May 10 15:00 to 18:00

First day

Grand Japanese wrestling tournament

21-9: May 11 15:00 to 18:00

Second day

Grand Japanese wrestling tournament

21-10: May 12 15:00 to 18:00

Third day

Grand Japanese wrestling tournament

21-11: May 13 15:00 to 18:00

Fourth day

Grand Japanese wrestling tournament

21-12: May 14 15:00 to 18:00

Fifth day

Grand Japanese wrestling tournament

71: Registered users

21-13: Ichiro

21-14: Jiro

21-15: Hanako

82: Changing recording time

17:00 to 18:00

76: Date: May 5

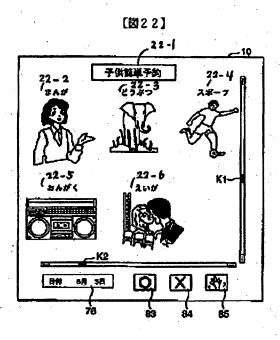
80: Register

78: Cancel

79: End

81: Topic

[Fig. 22]



22-1: Child-oriented simple genre selection

22-2: Animation

22-3: Animal

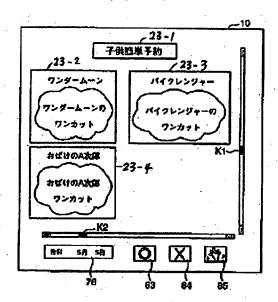
22-4: Sport

22-5: Music

22-6: Movie

76: Date: May 5

[图23]



23-1: Child-oriented simple reservation

23-2: Wonder Moon

(One cut of Wonder Moon)

23-3: Bike Ranger

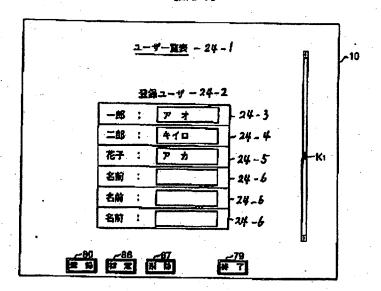
(One cut of Bike Ranger)

23-4: A Ghost Named A Jiro

(One cut of A Ghost Named A Jiro)

76: Date: May 5

[图24]



24-1: User table

24-2: Registered users

24-3: Ichiro: Blue

24-4: Jiro: Yellow

24-5: Hanako: Red

24-6: Name:

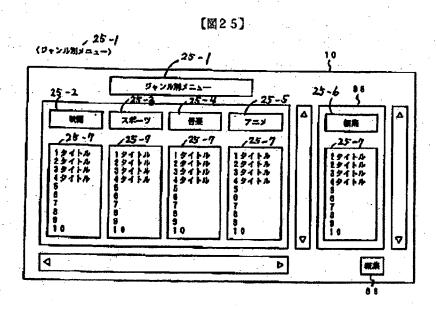
80: Register

86: Specify

87: Delete

79: End

[Fig. 25]



25-1: Menus classified by genre

25-2: Movie

25-3: Sport

25-4: Music

25-5: Animation

25-6: Edit

25-7:

1: Title

2: Title

3: Title

4: Title

5:

6:

7:

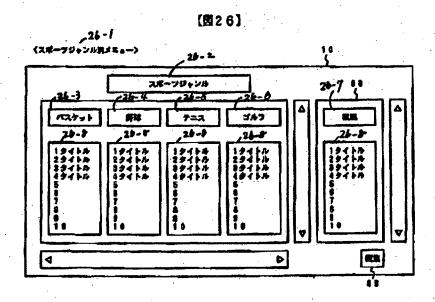
8:

9:

10:

89: Edit

[Fig. 26]



26-1: Menus classified by sport sub-genre

26-2: Menus classified by sport sub-genre

26-3: Basket

26-4: Baseball

26-5: Tennis

26-6 Golf

26-7: Edit

26-8:

1: Title

2: Title

3: Title

4: Title

5:

6:

7:

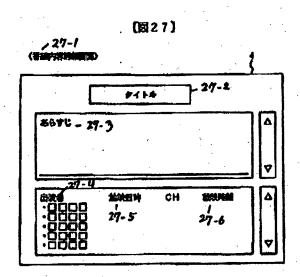
8:

9:

10:

89: Edit

[Fig. 27]



27-1: Screen showing details of contents of a program

27-2: Title

27-3: Synopsis

27-4: Performers

27-5: Broadcasting date

27-6: Broadcasting duration

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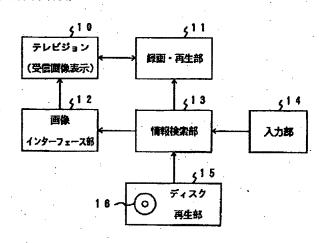
最終頁に続く

(54) 【発明の名称】 番組情報の記録媒体、情報記録装置及び録画予約装置

(57)【要約】

【課題】番組情報の記録媒体及びこの記録媒体を使用し た録画予約装置で、番組に関する様々な情報を素早く探 し出して見ること、及び新聞やテレビ雑誌等を参考にす る必要なく、所望の番組の録画予約を容易に且つ正確に 行なうこと。

【解決手段】放送局から配信された番組情報を予め記録 したDVD-RAM等の記録媒体16を利用することに より、当該番組情報に基づき番組表や番組内容等の様々 な情報を任意の形態の一覧表として表示できるばかり か、この番組表から所望の番組を直接指定して録画予約 を行ない、その録画予約情報をインデックス情報記録領 域に記録された指定番組の番組情報に対応させて管理で き、しかも、この録画予約情報に従って実際に番組が録 画される際には、録画予約した番組の画像が動画記録領 域に記録されると共に、対応する番組情報に付加する形 態で、録画の日時、開始位置、時間等のインデックス情 報を記録して管理できる。



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【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】 少なくともチャンネル番号,番組名,放送年月日,放送開始時間,放送終了時間を含む番組情報を予め記録してなることを特徴とする番組情報の記録媒体。

【請求項2】 少なくともチャンネル番号,番組名,放送年月日,放送開始時間,放送終了時間を含む番組情報を受け取る手段と、

前記番組情報を記憶する記憶手段と、

この記憶手段に記憶された前記番組情報を記録媒体に書き込む記録手段とを備えたことを特徴とする情報記録装置。

【請求項3】 少なくともチャンネル番号,番組名,放送年月日,放送開始時間,放送終了時間を含む番組情報を予め記録してなる記録媒体に記録された番組情報を読み出す読み出し手段と、

この読み出し手段により前記記録媒体から読み出された 番組情報を表示手段に表示するための信号を出力する手 段と、

前記表示手段に表示された番組情報に基づき番組録画の 20 予約を設定する予約設定手段とを具備したことを特徴と する番組情報の記録媒体を使用した録画予約装置。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【発明の属する技術分野】本発明は、番組情報の記録媒体、番組情報の記録媒体へ情報を記録する情報記録装置 及び番組情報の記録媒体を使用した録画予約装置に関する。

[0002]

【従来の技術】一般に、テレビジョン放送の番組を事前 30 に録画予約する場合には、新聞や雑誌の番組欄を見て、所望の番組を探し出すと共に、その番組の放送時間を確認し、ビデオデッキ等によりチャンネル番号,放送年月日,録画開始/終了時刻を設定することで行なっている。

【0003】すなわち、ビデオデッキを接続したテレビジョンの画面に対し、ビデオデッキ側で記憶される日付・曜日・開始時間・終了時間・チャンネル番号等の予約リストを転送して表示させ、この予約リストにおける各項目データを入力することで、所望の番組の録画予約を行なっている。

【0004】最近では、新聞の番組覧やテレビ雑誌等に各番組毎に掲載されている、8桁以下のGコードと呼ばれる数字を入力してビデオデッキの本体に転送することで、番組の録画予約が行なわれるようになっている。

【0005】ところで、このビデオデッキやGコードを 用いて録画予約をする場合には、ユーザは所望の番組に 関するチャンネル番号,放送年月日,録画開始/終了時 刻等の各情報を、新聞や雑誌等で確認しながら個々に入 力操作したり、あるいはGコードを数値配列により入力 操作しなければならないため、入力ミスにより録画予約 の内容が誤って設定されることがある。

【0006】また、新聞や雑誌の番組欄だけでは知り得ない各番組の内容や出演者のプロフィール等の情報は、前記番組欄以外にテレビ専門誌等の別の情報源を見る必要がある。

[0007]

【発明が解決しようとする課題】このように、従来のビデオデッキによる番組録画の予約方法では、ユーザは所望の番組に関するチャンネル番号、放送年月日、録画開始/終了時刻等の各情報を、新聞の番組覧やテレビ専門誌等を見て行なう必要があり、入力ミスによる録画ミスの発生を招きやすい問題があった。

【0008】また、番組の内容や出演者等のより詳しい情報を、すぐに入手することができず不便である問題があった。

【0009】本発明は、前記の問題を解決するためになされたもので、その第1の目的は、番組に関する様々な情報を素早く探し出して見ることがことが可能になる番組情報の記録媒体を提供することにある。

【0010】また、本発明の第2の目的は、新聞やテレビ雑誌等を参考にする必要なく、所望の番組の録画予約を容易に且つ正確に行なうことが可能になる番組情報の記録媒体を使用した録画予約装置を提供することにある。

[0011]

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【課題を解決するための手段】すなわち、本発明の請求 項1に係わる番組情報の記録媒体は、少なくともチャン ネル番号,番組名,放送年月日,放送開始時間,放送終 了時間を含む番組情報を予め記録してなることを特徴と する。

【0012】つまり、請求項1に係わる番組情報の記録 媒体では、例えば光ディスクに対して、少なくともチャンネル番号、番組名、放送年月日、放送開始時間、放送 終了時間を含む番組情報が予め記録されているので、この光ディスクを再生装置に掛ければ、所望の番組に関す る情報を瞬時に検索して見ることができることになる。

【0013】また、本発明の請求項2に係わる情報記録装置は、少なくともチャンネル番号、番組名、放送年月日、放送開始時間、放送終了時間を含む番組情報を受け取る手段と、前記番組情報を記憶する記憶手段と、この記憶手段に記憶された前記番組情報を記録媒体に書き込む記録手段とを備えたことを特徴とする。

【0014】つまり、本発明の請求項2に係わる情報記録装置では、ユーザが立ち寄り易いキーステーションに配置され、少なくともチャンネル番号、番組名、放送年月日、放送開始時間、放送終了時間を含む番組情報を受信して記憶している。この記憶された番組情報をユーザが持参した例えば光ディスクや磁気ディスク、光磁気ディスク等のDVD-RAMやリムーバブルHDD、MO

等の小型の書き換え可能な記録媒体に対して記録することで、ユーザはこの記録媒体に記憶された番組情報に基づいて容易に録画予約の設定を行なうことが可能となる。また、ユーザが記録媒体を持参しない場合には、新規な記録媒体(CD-ROMのような書き換え不可能な媒体でも良い)に番組情報を記録してユーザに販売することで、ユーザは同様に記録媒体に記憶された番組情報に基づいて容易に録画予約の設定を行なうことが可能となる。

【0015】また、本発明の請求項3に係わる番組情報 10 の記録媒体を使用した録画予約装置は、少なくともチャンネル番号,番組名,放送年月日,放送開始時間,放送終了時間を含む番組情報を予め記録してなる記録媒体に記録された番組情報を読み出す読み出し手段と、この読み出し手段により前記記録媒体から読み出された番組情報を表示手段に表示するための信号を出力する手段と、前記表示手段に表示された番組情報に基づき番組録画の予約を設定する予約設定手段とを具備したことを特徴とする。

【0016】つまり、請求項3に係わる番組情報の記録 20 媒体を使用した録画予約装置では、少なくともチャンネル番号,番組名,放送年月日,放送開始時間,放送終了時間を含む番組情報を予め記録してなる光ディスク等の記録媒体から読み出された番組情報が表示され、この表示された番組情報に基づいて番組録画の予約が設定されるので、所望の番組に関するチャンネル番号,番組名,放送年月日,放送開始時間,放送終了時間をそのまま録画予約の情報として設定できることになる。

[0017]

【発明の実施の形態】以下図面により本発明の実施の形 30 態について説明する。

【0018】図1は本発明の実施形態に係わる番組録画 予約装置の構成を示すブロック図である。

【0019】この番組録画予約装置は、光ディスク等の記録媒体16に記録されている情報を再生するディスク再生部15、ユーザが記録媒体16に記録されている情報から必要な情報を検索したり、該検索した情報に基づいて録画の予約等をするための命令を入力する入力部14、入力部14からの命令信号を受けて記録媒体16に記録されている情報を検索する情報検索部13、番組予40約表・検索情報のメニュー表示・再生画像等をテレビジョン10へ入力するためのインターフェースからなる画像インターフェース部12、ビデオデッキ等の画像・音声を録画再生する録画・再生部11から構成される。

【0020】実際の画像の表示は、受信機能が入っている通常のテレビジョシ10が用いられる。

【0021】前記記録媒体16には、チャンネル番号、 テレビジョン局名、放送年月日、放送時間(開始・終 了)、番組名、主な番組出演者、内容等の番組情報が予 め記録されており、この記録媒体16をディスク再生部 50 15に掛けて再生することにより、記録媒体16に記録されている番組情報が、例えば番組一覧表として情報検索部13により検索され、画像インターフェイス部12を介してテレビジョン10に表示される。

【0022】この場合、前記情報記録媒体16から検索表示される番組一覧表には、「ジャンル」「番組予約」「予約取消」「番組内容」「出演者」のプロファイル等のメニューが共に表示され、入力部14により画面上のカーソルを操作し、例えば「番組内容」をクリックすると、映画の予告編に相当する内容が表示される。また、「出演者」をクリックすると、番組に出演している出演者のリストが画面表示され、さらに所望の出演者を選択すると、そのプロファイル情報が表示出力される。

【0023】そして、前記番組一覧表等の表示状態において、所望の番組の情報をカーソルで指示した状態で、メニュー上の「番組予約」をクリックすると、その番組情報に含まれる放送年月日、チャンネル番号、放送開始・終了時間がそのまま録画予約の情報として読み出され、録画・再生部11にセットされる。

【0024】また、前記番組一覧表と共に表示されるメニュー内の「ジャンル」を選択すると、音楽、映画、スポーツ、教養、囲碁・将棋、演劇、ニュース、天気等のジャンル別に番組の選択を行なうことができ、それぞれのジャンルにおいて放送日、放送開始時間、終了時間、チャンネル番号、放送局名、内容、出演者等の情報を表示出力することもできる。もちろん、録画の予約は1つだけではなく、複数個の番組を予約することも可能である。

【0025】図2は前記番組録画予約装置のディスク再生部15にセットする記録媒体16としてDVD(デジタルビデオディスク)-RAM16を利用した場合の番組情報入手経路を示す図である。

【0026】放送局21から、例えば放送信号にのせて 配信される番組情報は、キーステーション22にて受信 されて記憶保存される。

【0027】キーステーション22となる、コンビニエンス・ストア、書店、駅の売店等のユーザが立ち寄り易い場所等に、DVD-RAM16の記録装置を設置する。

【0028】この記録装置は、自動販売機方式となっており、所定の料金が支払われた場合には、番組情報の所定のデータをDVD-RAM16に書き込む等の作業を行なって、データをユーザに販売する。

【0029】記録装置は、放送局21等から配信されてくる番組表データ等を受信する受信手段と、この受信手段によって受信された番組表データ他の種々のデータを記憶する記憶手段と、DVD-RAM16に情報を書き込む書き込み手段とを備えている。

【0030】記憶手段には、オンライン (電話回線等) あるいはオフラインでデータが配信され、最新のデータ

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が更新されて記憶されている。このデータの更新は、隔 週あるいは毎週等、予め定められた時期に最新のデータ に書き換えられる。

【0031】ユーザは、DVD-RAM16を所有している場合には、記録装置の料金投入口に所定金額を投入し、DVD-RAM16の挿入口にDVD-RAM16をセットする。DVD-RAM16がセットされると書き込み手段により最新データがDVD-RAM16に記録される。

【0032】ユーザがDVD-RAM16を所有してい 10 ない場合には、自動販売機方式の上記記録装置によって 新規にデータの記録されたDVD-RAM16 (記録媒体)を購入することができる。

【0033】図3は放送局から配信される番組情報のデータフォーマットの一例を示す図である。

【0034】図4は前記番組録画予約装置のディスク再生部15にセットされる記録媒体16に記録される各チャンネル、各番組毎の番組情報の記録状態を示す図である。

【0035】各テレビ局から配信される番組情報には、 図3に示すように、番組ヘッダ、及び放送している番組 の情報が含まれている。

【0036】番組ヘッダには、チャンネル番号、放送年 月日、番組数、各番組へのオフセットが入っており、各 番組の番組情報には、番組のタイトル、各番組の放送時 間、終了時間、番組のジャンル分けコード、番組紹介の 内容が入っている。

【0037】ここで、前記各番組へのオフセットは、例えば番組1から番組10を探す場合に、番組1から番組10までをスクロールしながら移動させるのではなく、ヘッダの情報で余分なところは検索せずに、希望の番組10を直接検索するための機能に利用される。

【0038】そして、前記図3における各チャンネル、 各番組毎の番組情報が、図4に示すように、チャンネル 1からチャンネルNまで順次配列されて記録される。

【0039】次に、前記番組情報及び録画予約情報及び 録画した画像情報を、DVD-RAM16を用いて記録 する場合における各種情報の(記録・再生) (検索・表 示) (予約設定) (編集) の具体的な機能について説明 する。

【0040】この場合、図1における番組録画予約装置のディスク再生部15は、DVD-RAM16の記録・再生を行なうディスク記録・再生部として構成する。

【0041】(記録・再生)図5はDVD-RAM16における情報記録領域の割り当て状態を示す図である。

【0042】DVD-RAM16は、その内周側に番組及びインデックス情報記録領域16aが割り当てられ、また、外周側に動画記録領域16bが割り当てられる。

【0043】番組及びインデックス情報記録領域16a には、前記放送局21からキーステーション22を介し て配信された番組情報 (図3, 図4参照) が記録される と共に、その録画予約情報、録画後のインデックス情報 等が記録される。

【0044】動画記録領域16bには、前記録画予約情報に従った番組の録画に伴なう動画像が記録される。

【0045】図6は前記DVD-RAM16の番組及びインデックス情報記録領域16aに記録されるインデックス情報の一例を示す図である。

【0046】このインデックス情報としては、同インデックス情報記録領域16aに記憶されている番組情報及び録画予約情報に基づいて、録画した各番組毎の「番組タイトル」「種類」「録画日時」「録画開始位置」「録画時間」等が記録される。

【0047】すなわち、DVD-RAM16内に、どのような動画が録画されているかを検索するには、番組及びインデックス情報記録領域16aにおいて、図6に示したように、「番組タイトル」「種類(スポーツ、ドラマ等)」「録画日時」「録画開始位置」「録画時間」等を記録したインデックス情報が有用である。

【0048】図7は前記DVD-RAM16に対する放送番組の録画に伴なうインデックス情報記録処理を示すフローチャートである。

【0049】すなわち、DVD-RAM16の番組及びインデックス情報記録領域16aに記憶されている録画予約情報に従って、放送番組の録画が開始されると、同番組及びインデックス情報記録領域16aに記憶されている番組情報に基づき、録画の対象となっている「番組タイトル」「種類(スポーツ、ドラマ等)」が読み出されてインデックス情報として記録される(ステップA1)。

【0050】また、これと共に、録画に伴なう番組の動画像が、動画像記録領域16bに記録される(ステップA2)。

【0051】すると、前記動画像記録領域16bに対する画像の記録に伴ない、その「録画日時」「録画開始位置」「録画時間」が、さらにインデックス情報として前記番組及びインデックス情報記録領域16aに記録される(ステップA3)。

【0052】従来は、このインデックス情報は、録画時間及び録画日時については、内部時計から自動的に記録するものもあったが、タイトル、出演者等は、人手で文字入力しなければならず、入力時間が掛かり非常に煩わしい作業であった。

【0053】これによれば、配信された番組情報に基づいて番組タイトル、出演者、あらすじ等を読み出し、人手を介さずに録画のインデックス情報として記録できるので、非常に効率的である。

【0054】一方、前記DVD-RAM16に記録した インデックス情報を再生して利用する際は、例えばDV 50 D-RAM16を記録・再生部に挿入した際に、番組及

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びインデックス情報記録領域16aに記録されている「番組タイトル」を情報検索部13により検索し、画像インターフェイス12を介してテレビジョン10に出力することによって、録画番組を容易に理解することができる。また、リモコン等の入力手段14等を利用して希望の「番組タイトル」を選択し、対応するインデックス情報の「録画開始位置」から録画番組を再生することができる。

【0055】よって、容易に希望の録画番組の選択及び 再生が行なえるばかりでなく、その他のインデックス情 10 報として記録された情報内容を検索することにより、例 えば希望する出演者がこのディスクに記録されているか 等の様々な検索、再生を行なうことが可能である。

【0056】また、番組情報とリンクして、表示する番組情報の一覧表に記録済みのマークを付けたり、色を変えて画像出力したりすることによって、容易に録画済みか否かの判断が可能である。

【0057】(検索・表示)図8は前記DVD-RAM 16に対する記録情報の検索・表示に係わる構成を中心 として示すブロック図である。

【0058】前記放送局21からキーステーション22を介して配信された番組情報をDVD-RAM16に記録させると、TV番組の一覧表をモニタに表示する際に、種々の表示形式を選択することが可能である。

【0059】最も基本的な表示方式は、新聞等のTV番組欄のように、横軸に放送チャンネル、縦軸に放送時間を取って全てのジャンルの放送番組をマトリックス的に表示するものである。

【0060】これに対して、以下ではユーザが全ての放送番組の一覧表示よりもジャンル別の表示により見たい 30番組を容易に探し出せるようにした実施の形態について説明する。

【0061】図9はジャンル別表示による放送番組の一 覧表示状態を示す図である。

【0062】すなわち、図9に示すように、例えば映画、スポーツ、ドラマ、音楽、アニメ、料理、ニュース・天気予報等のジャンル別に、そのジャンルの番組のみを選択して放送時間と放送チャンネルとのマトリックスとして一覧表示するものである。同図に示されるようなジャンル別の一覧表示を行なうことにより、ユーザは、見たいジャンルの番組から容易に目的の放送番組を探すことができる。

【0063】図10はジャンル別の階層表示による放送 番組の一覧表示状態を示す図である。

【0064】すなわち、ジャンル別表示にも階層表示を 行なうことができ、上位、中位、下位のジャンル等にさ らに詳細な一覧表示を行なうことができる。

【0065】例えばドラマのジャンルであれば、図10 に示すように、中位ジャンルとして1時間ドラマ、2時 間ドラマ等の放送時間別や、下位ジャンルとしてトレン 50 ディ・ドラマ、時代劇等の種類別等の設定を行うことも できる。

【0066】また、スポーツであれば、野球、相撲、サッカー等の種類別表示も下位メニューとして用意される。下位メニューは、例えば大ジャンルを選択した後に、下位メニューをユーザが指定することにより詳細表示がなされる。

【0067】これらのジャンル別表示は、放送局21から番組情報を配信する際に、予め該番組情報の中にジャンルを指定したフラグを設けておき、受信手段32(キーステーション22)を介して番組表(情報)を受信あるいは入手したユーザが、番組録画予約装置30内でこれらの情報を当該装置内に設けられた検索手段13aによりジャンル別のフラグとして検索することにより、表示に必要なジャンルのみの番組を選択可能である。

【0068】そして、前記検索手段13aにより選択された必要なジャンルのみを、放送時間と放送チャンネルとのマトリックスとして作成手段31aにより作成しモニタ(テレビジョン)10にて一覧表示する。また、上記した上位、中位、下位のジャンル分けは、上位のジャンルを示すフラグにリンクさせて中位あるいは下位等のフラグを付すことにより達成できる。

【0069】これらの検索から表示までの具体的な方法は、例えば図8にて示すような番組録画予約装置30により実現される。

【0070】図8における番組録画予約装置30では、番組表(番組情報)の詳細なデータは、オンライン配信方式(通信を利用して放送局から電波で飛ばす、インターネット、CATVの双方向利用等)で受信手段32(キーステーション22)を介して配信される場合を例にとって示しているが、オフライン配信方式(CD-ROM、DVD-ROM、DVD-RAM等)でも良い。【0071】前記番組表データ(番組情報)は、動画や静止画を含む膨大な量のデータを含んでおり、記憶手段としては記憶容量が大きく、書き換えが可能なDVD-RAM51のようなものが望ましいが、既存のHDD、半導体RAM、MO等の記憶装置でも良い。

【0072】DVD-RAM16に保存されたデータには、前述した通り予め番組の種類に応じたフラグが設けられている。ユーザは必要に応じてジャンル別の番組一覧を作成するために、リモコン、キーボード、マウス等の入力デバイス14により指定したいジャンルの入力を行なう。入力デバイス14から入力されたジャンル情報はフラグ検索手段13aに入力されてフラグ検索処理が起動される。

【0073】フラグ検索手段13aは、入力されたジャンル情報に基づいて、それに対応したフラグ情報の付された番組情報を、DVD-RAM16の中から検索し、必要な番組情報を一旦DVD-RAM16の中の別な記憶エリアに記憶する。

【0074】必要な全ての番組情報が検索できた時点で、番組一覧表を作成するための一覧表作成手段31aにより、DVD-RAM16から読み出した情報に応じて、選択されたジャンル別の番組を、図9に示したようなジャンル別の一覧表として作成してモニタ10に表示させる。

【0075】また、この実施形態では、上記のジャンル別の検索以外にも次に示すような検索が可能である。

【0076】例えば、音楽番組やドラマの出演者名で検索したい場合には、出演者のキーワード検索が可能である。ジャンル別の検索の場合には、ある程度ジャンルを特定できるので、予め番組情報の中にジャンルに対応したフラグを付して、このフラグデータに基づいて、上記フラグ検索手段13aにより検索が可能であるが、キーワード検索の場合には、例えば検索したい出演者の数が膨大となるため、フラグ情報を予め付しておくことは現実的ではない。したがって、番組情報に含まれているアーティストの名前、グループ名、俳優の名前等の出演者名を全部の情報の中から、全文検索として検索するように構成する。

【0077】また、配信されるデータとして、上記のような番組情報を種々の形式で表示するためのデータ以外に、次に示すようなデータを含めておくことができる。 【0078】特に、番組情報を表示する番組表表示以外

10078】特に、番組情報を表示する番組収表があた。 のメニューを用意して、配信される番組情報以外のデータも表示あるいは検索が可能に構成できる。

【0079】番組情報以外の表示データとしては、様々なベスト10情報のようなものが採用できる。例えば、テレビ視聴率ベスト10、音楽ヒット曲ベスト10、レンタルビデオベスト10、CD販売ベスト10、有線放 30送ベスト10等である。

【0080】これらのデータでは、さらに詳細データ (例えば下位メニュー)として、音楽ベスト10やCD 販売ベスト10であれば、日米別のシングルベスト1 0、日米別のアルバルベスト10や、音楽ジャンル別に ダンスミュージックベスト10、演歌ベスト10、歌謡 曲ベスト10等のデータとして提供できる。

【0081】また、視聴者等による人気投票データも、 例えば人気番組部門、俳優部門、歌手部門、司会者部 門、CM部門等のデータとして配信して表示できる。

【0082】これらのデータは、ベスト10に留まらずベスト100等の多数のデータを表示することも可能であるし、また、人気俳優ベスト100では、俳優名を入力することにより前述の通り検索することも可能である。

【0083】また、本実施形態における番組情報の記録 手段には、DVD-RAM16等の記憶容量の大きな記 憶手段を用いて構成しているので、前述した通り動画や 静止画のデータも番組表の中で表示することが可能であ る。 【0084】例えば、ジャンル別データとして映画やドラマを選択した場合には、映画やドラマのダイジェスト版を下位メニューに用意することができる。つまり、ジャンル別に映画の番組表を表示させ、好みの映画を選択してダイジェストを見るメニューを選択することにより、どのような内容の映画であるのかが、静止画あるいは動画を含めた解説ダイジェストとして番組内容を確認することができる。

【0085】また、上記のベスト10情報のような情報 10 データにも、下位メニューを用意することができる。つまり、音楽ベスト10では、動画と音声によりヒット曲を歌う歌手のダイジェスト部分を見ることもできる。

【0086】また、ダイジェストデータとしては、新ドラマのPRデータ等の広告情報や、TVCMでオンエアされている企業のCM等も番組情報の配信データとして含めることができる。このように、企業の製品広告等の広告媒体としても利用することができ、番組表データ以外にも種々のデータを番組情報に含めて配信することができる。

【0087】 (予約設定) 図11は前記番組録画予約装置の番組録画の予約に係わる構成を示すブロック図でである。

【0088】図11において、番組データ格納手段としての番組データベース16alは、例えば光ディスク、フロッピーディスク、ハードディスク、あるいは半導体メモリ等により構成されており、この番組データベース16alには、番組を識別する番組識別データ、番組開始時刻データ、番組終了時刻データ、番組名に関するデータ等の番組情報がそれぞれ番組毎に格納されている。そして、この番組データベース16alは、後述する機器本体を構成する制御手段としてのシステムコントローラ31に対して着脱自在に装着されるようなされている。

【0090】また、システムコントローラ31には、番40 組指定手段としての入力装置(入力部)14が接続されており、これは表示装置10に表示された番組表をマウス等によって指定できるようにしたポインティングディバイスによる番組指定制御もシステムコントローラ31におけるµpuにより実行される。

【0091】そして、前記システムコントローラ31には時計回路33が接続され、この時計回路33よりもたらされる現在時刻に関する計時データは後述するように番組予約の時に利用される。

【0092】一方、システムコントローラ31には、記50 録・再生装置11(ディスク記録・再生部を含む)、例

えば光ディスク装置が接続されており、システムコントローラ31からの命令により、指定された番組が記録される。

【0093】また、システムコントローラ31には、指定番組データ格納手段としての指定番組データベース16a2が接続されており、この指定番組データベース16a2には、入力装置14により選択指定された番組データが格納され、この番組データにおける放送チャンネル、放送開始時刻、放送終了時刻、予約ユーザ名、登録ユーザ名を使用し、表示装置10に表示する番組表を編集す 10る。

【0094】次に、以上の構成による番組録画予約装置30の動作について説明する。

【0095】図12は図11における録画予約装置のシステムコントローラ31を中心とした録画予約処理を示すフローチャートである。

【0096】図13は図11における録画予約装置の録画予約処理に伴なう日付別予約処理を示すフローチャートである。

【0097】図14は図11における録画予約装置の録 20 画予約処理に伴なうジャンル別予約処理を示すフローチャートである。

【0098】図15は図11における録画予約装置の録画予約処理に伴なう子供簡単予約処理を示すフローチャートである。

【0099】図16は図11における録画予約装置の録画予約処理に伴なうユーザ登録処理を示すフローチャートである。

【0100】図17は前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理 に伴なうメインメニュー画面の表示状態を示す図である。

【0101】図18は前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理 に伴なう日付別予約画面の表示状態を示す図である。

【0102】図19は前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理 に伴なうトピックス画面の表示状態を示す図である。

【0103】図20は前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理 に伴なうジャンル別予約画面の表示状態を示す図であ る。

【0104】図21は前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理 に伴なうスポーツ番組用予約画面の表示状態を示す図で 40 ある。

【0105】図22は前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理 に伴なう子供簡単予約画面の第1表示状態を示す図であ る。

【0106】図23は前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理 に伴なう子供簡単予約画面の第2表示状態を示す図であ る。

【0107】図24は前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理 に伴なうユーザ登録画面の表示状態を示す図である。

【0108】まず、録画予約が選択されるとステップB 50

21に移行する。

【0109】ステップB21では、図17で示すように、メインメニュー画面が表示装置10に表示され、

「日付予約」72,「ジャンル予約」73,「子供簡単予約」74,「ユーザ指定」75の各項目を配列した予約分類一覧表(72~75)と現在のユーザ及び登録ユーザを表示している登録ユーザ欄71、及び「日付」76、「選択」77、「取消」78、「終了」79の各項目が表示される。

【0110】カーソルを表示装置10上の画面の選択したい項目に位置させてクリックすると、その項目の文字色が変化するようにシステムコントローラ31が作用する。

【0111】次に、任意の項目にカーソルを位置させてクリックすることにより、フローチャートは選択された項目のサブルーチン、日付サブルーチン(図13)、ジャンルサブルーチン(図14)、子供簡単サブルーチン(図15)及びユーザ指定サブルーチン(図16)に移行する。

【0112】次に、各サブルーチンについて説明する。 【0113】〈日付別録画予約〉日付予約を選択した場合、図13における日付別予約処理のステップB42に移行し、システムコントローラ31は、番組データベース16alと指定番組データベース16a2を読み取ると共に、同システムコントローラ31は、番組データベース16alと指定番組データベース16a2、時計回路33からのデータに基づき、当日の番組表を編集して、図18に示すように、表示装置10に表示させる。

【0114】図18における日付別予約画面は、番組表、及び登録ユーザ欄71、「日付」76、「登録」80、「取消」78、「トピックス」81、「終了」79の各項目から構成される。

【0115】番組表は、縦方向が時刻、横方向は受信チャンネルを示し、それぞれの軸にはスクロールバーがあり、スクロールバーの矢印にカーソルを位置させクリックすると、縦軸のスクロールバーの場合は受信チャンネルがスクロールされ、表示装置10上に表示できない番組をそれぞれのスクロールポインタk1, k2に従って表示することができる。

【0116】番組表は、既に予約されている番組欄は、 それを予約したユーザの指定色で地色が変化しており、 また、録画終了番組は、ユーザ色以外の色に変化してい る。

【0117】そして、図13における日付別予約処理のステップB42において、入力装置14によりカーソルを表示装置10上の任意の番組欄に位置させてクリックすると、枠色が使用ユーザ色に変化するするようにシステムコントローラ31が作用する。

【0118】次にカーソルを選択の項目に位置させてク

リックすると地色が予約したユーザ色に変化し、予約が 確定される。

【0119】また、予約時にその番組の途中から録画したい場合は、記録時間変更欄82にカーソルを位置させて、入力装置14により時間を入力することにより、録画時間を変更できる。

【0120】また、カーソルを「取消」78に位置させてクリックすると、番組欄の枠色が変化している番組の予約が取り消される。

【0121】また、番組欄の枠色が変化している状態で、カーソルを「トピックス」81に位置させてクリックすると、システムコントローラ31により、表示装置10上に、図19に示すように、番組名、内容、登場人物、見所等のトピックス画面が前記番組欄に変わり表示される。なお、この場合、前記番組欄の上にトピックス画面を重ねあわせて表示してもよい。

【0122】必要なデータを検索した後は、カーソルを 終了79に位置させてクリックすることにより、図18 で示す日付別予約画面が表示装置10に表示され、入力 装置14からの入力待ちになる。

【0123】このようにして必要なテレビ番組の予約等の操作が終了した際に、カーソルを「終了」79の項目に位置させてクリックすると、番組録画予約情報は、指定番組データベース16a2に格納される。そして、前記録画予約処理(図12)におけるステップB21に移行し、図17におけるメインメニュー画面である予約分類一覧表が表示される。

【0124】ここで、「終了」79の項目を選択すると、ステップB27に移行し、録画予約は終了される。

【0125】 <ジャンル別録画予約>ジャンル予約を選 30 択した場合、システムコントローラ31は、図14におけるジャンル別予約のサブルーチンに移行し、該システムコントローラ31により、番組データベース16alと指定番組データベース16a2、時計回路33からのデータが読み取られる。すると、システムコントローラ31により、表示装置10に対し、図20に示すようなジャンル別予約画面が表示される。

【0126】図20におけるジャンル別予約画面は、映画、まんが、ドラマ、レジャー、クイズ、ニュース、動物、自然等の各ジャンルの項目、「日付」76、「トピ 40ックス」81、「終了」79の各項目から構成される。また、ジャンル項目画面の横軸、縦軸にはスクロールバーがあり、ジャンル項目画面に表示できないジャンル項目はスクロールポインタk1, k2の移動に応じて表示される。そして、カーソルを選択したいジャンルの項目上に位置させてクリックすると、その地色が変化し、次に選択の項目にカーソルを位置させクリックすると、システムコントローラ31により、図21に示すような、ジャンル別(この場合「スポーツ」)の予約画面が表示装置4に表示される。

【0127】図21は前記ジャンル項目画面で「スポーツ」を選択した場合であり、この予約画面は、番組表、及び登録ユーザ欄71、「日付」76、「登録」80、「取消」78、「トピックス」81、「終了」79、記録時間変更欄82の各項目から構成される。

【0128】前記番組表は、縦方向がスポーツ項目の時刻、横方向はスポーツの種類を示し、それぞれの軸にはスクロールバーがあり、スクロールバーの矢印にカーソルを位置させクリックすると、縦軸のスクロールバーの場合はスポーツの種類がスクロールされ、表示装置10上に表示できない番組を表示することができる。また、番組表において、既に予約されている番組欄は、それを予約したユーザ色で地色が変化しており、また、放送終了番組と録画終了番組は、ユーザ色以外の色に変化している。

【0129】そして、図14におけるジャンル別予約処理のステップB52において、入力装置14によりカーソルを表示装置10上の番組欄に位置させてクリックすると、その枠色が使用ユーザ色に変化するするようにシステムコントローラ31が作用する。次にカーソルを選択の項目に位置させてクリックすると、地色が予約したユーザ色に変化し、予約が確定される。

【0130】また、予約時に録画時間を変更したい場合は、記録時間変更欄82にカーソルを位置させて、入力 装置14により時間を入力することにより、録画時間を 変更できる。

【0131】また、カーソルを「取消」78の項目に位置させてクリックすると、番組欄の枠色が変化している番組の予約が取り消される。

【0132】また、番組欄の枠色が変化している状態で、カーソルを「トピックス」81の項目に位置させてクリックすると、システムコントローラ31により表示装置10上に、図19で示したような、番組名、内容、登場人物、見所等のトピックス画面が番組欄に変わり表示される。

【0133】そして、必要なトピックス情報を表示させた後、カーソルを「終了」79の項目に位置させてクリックすると、再び図21における番組欄が表示装置10に表示され、入力装置14からの入力待ちになる。

【0134】このようにして必要なテレビ番組の予約等の操作が終了した時、カーソルを「終了」79の項目に位置させてクリックすると、その番組録画予約情報は、指定番組データベース16a2に格納される。そしてステップB51に移行し、図20におけるジャンル別予約画面が再表示される。

【0135】ここで、さらに「終了」79の項目を選択すると、図12における録画予約処理のステップB21に移行し、図17に示したような、メインメニュー画面である予約分類一覧表が表示される。ここで、さらに、「終了」700円まり、700円を

50 「終了」79の項目を選択すると、ステップB27に移

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行し、録画予約処理は終了される。

【0136】<子供簡単予約>子供簡単予約を選択した 場合、システムコントローラ31の処理は、図15にお ける子供簡単予約サブルーチンに移行し、該システムコ シトローラ31により、番組データベース16alと指定 番組データベース16a2、時計回路33からのデータが 読み取られる。すると、システムコントローラ31によ り、表示装置10に対して、図22に示すように、子供 簡単予約画面が表示される。この図22における子供簡 単予約画面は、まんが、どうぶつ、スポーツ、おんが く、えいが等の項目がひらがな、カタカナ、及び絵で表 示されているジャンルの項目、及び「日付」76、

「O」83、「×」84、手印85の各項目から構成さ れる。

【0137】ここで、「O」83は選択、「×」84は 取消、手印85は終了を表現している。

【0138】また、絵文字によるジャンル項目画面の横 軸、縦軸にはスクロールバーがあり、該ジャンル項目画 面に表示できないジャンル項目が表示される。カーソル を選択したいジャンルの項目上に位置させてクリックす 20 ると、その地色が変化し、次に「〇」(選択) 83の項 目にカーソルを位置させクリックすると、システムコン トローラ31により、図23に示すように、表示装置1 0に対して番組の1カットによる子供簡単予約画面が表 示させる。この図23における子供簡単予約画面は、前 記図22におけるジャンルにおいて"まんが"を選択し た場合である。この図23における子供簡単予約画面 は、番組名とその1カットを表示した番組表、「日付」 76、「O」83、「×」84、手印85の項目から構 成される。

【0139】番組表には、それぞれの軸にスクロールバ ーがあり、スクロールバーの矢印にカーソルを位置させ クリックすると番組表がスクロールされ、表示装置10 上に表示できない番組を表示することができる。番組表 は既に予約されている番組欄が、それを予約したユーザ 色で地色が変化されており、また、録画終了番組は、ユ ーザ色以外の色に変化されている。

【0140】そして、図15における子供簡単予約処理 のステップB62において、入力装置14によりカーソ ルを表示装置10上の番組欄に位置させてクリックする 40 と、枠色が使用ユーザ色に変化するようにシステムコン トローラ31が作用する。次にカーソルを「〇」83の 項目に位置させてクリックすると、地色が予約したユー ザ色に変化し、予約が確定される。

【0141】また、カーソルを「×」84の項目に位置 させてクリックすると番組欄の枠色が変化している番組 の予約が取り消される。

【0142】このようにして必要なテレビ番組の予約等 の操作が終了した際に、カーソルを手印85の項目に位 置させてクリックすると、番組予約情報は指定番組デー 50

タベース16a2に格納される。そしてステップB61に 移行し、前記図22における絵文字によるジャンル別項 目画面が再表示される。ここで、手印85の項目を選択 すると、図12における予約録画処理のステップB21 に移行し、図17におけるメインメニューである予約分 類一覧表が表示される。そして、「終了」79の項目を 選択するとステップB27に移行し、録画予約は終了さ れる。

【0143】 <ユーザ指定>前記図17におけるメイン 10 メニュー画面において、ユーザ指定75の項目を選択し た場合、システムコントローラ31は、図16における ユーザ指定サブルーチンに移行し、該システムコントロ ーラ31により、指定番組データベース16a2が読み取 られる。するとシステムコントローラ31により、指定 番組データベース16a2からユーザデータが検索され、 図24に示すようなユーザー覧表示画面が表示装置10 に対して表示される。この図24におけるユーザー覧表 示画面は、登録ユーザ名とそのユーザ色を示した登録ユ ーザの各項目、「登録」80、「指定」86、「削除」 87、「終了」79の各項目から構成される。

【0144】登録ユーザ項目の縦軸にはスクロールバー があり、このスクロール操作により登録ユーザ項目に表 示できない登録ユーザ名が表示装置10上に表示され る。ユーザの登録、編集をする場合は、カーソルを選択 したい登録ユーザの項目上に位置させてクリックすると その枠色が変化し、その登録ユーザの項目が編集可能に なり、まず、入力装置14から名前、色を入力する。次 に登録の項目にカーソルを位置させてクリックすると、 編集した内容が指定番組データベース 1 6 a2に登録され る。

【0145】一方、現在使用しているユーザを変更する 場合は、選択したい登録ユーザ項目上にカーソルを位置 させてクリックするとその枠色が変化し、次に指定の項 目にカーソルを位置させクリックすると地色が変化し、 現在の使用ユーザとして登録される。

【0146】また、カーソルを「取消」87の項目に位 置させてクリックすると、選択している登録ユーザを削 除できる。

【0147】そして、ユーザに関して入力が終了した場 合は、カーソルを「終了」79に位置させてクリックす ると指定ユーザデータベースに登録される。そして、前 記図12におけるステップB21に移行し、図17にお けるメインメニュー画面である予約分類一覧表が表示さ れる。ここで、「終了」79の項目を選択するとステッ プB27に移行し、録画予約は終了される。

【0148】以上の番組録画予約装置30では、録画予 約の操作が簡単であり、ユーザを識別することにより、 一台の番組録画予約装置30を複数のユーザが使用する 場合でも、予約情報が誰のものかを明確に判明でき、誤 って他人の予約を消したり、同一番組を重複して予約す

もよい。

る事を未然に防ぐことができる。

【0149】(編集)動画や静止画などが録画されているDVD-RAM16 (図5参照)から、ジャンル別、番組の種類、タイトル、あらすじ、録画年月日、録画時間等を編集する場合には、当該ディスク内の番組及びインデックス情報記録領域16aに記録されているインデックス情報(図6参照)を利用することが有用な手段である。

【0150】図25はDVD-RAM16に記録された 番組録画情報を編集する場合のジャンル別メニュー表示 10 画面を示す図である。

【0151】図26は図25におけるジャンル別メニュー表示画面から選択されたスポーツジャンル別メニュー表示画面を示す図である。

【0152】図27は番組録画情報の編集処理に伴なう番組内容詳細画面の表示状態を示す図である。

【0153】すなわち、DVD-RAM16を、編集機能を備えた画像出力装置に挿入した場合に、自動的にインデックス情報、例えば映画、スポーツ、音楽、アニメ、料理、ニュース、天気予報、ドラマ等のジャンル別20に、全ての録画番組のタイトルが図25に示すように、表示装置(テレビジョン)10に表示される。ここで、任意のジャンルの任意のタイトルを、マウス、キーボード、リモコン等の入力装置で選択し編集画面にドラックまたはクリック等の操作によってコピーして、希望する編集を行なう。

【0154】また、このメニュー表示画面では、階層表示を行なうことができ、例えば図26に示すように、スポーツのジャンル別メニュー表示画面では、バスケット、野球、テニス、ゴルフ等の下位のスポーツジャンル 30として表示される。

【0155】この際、さらに図27に示すように、番組内容の詳細、例えばドラマのあらすじ、出演者、録画日時、録画時間、録画チャンネル等の詳細な一覧表示を行なうことができる。これら何れの表示画面からでも、リモコン、キーボード、マウス等の入力装置14を利用して、編集したい動画や静止画のタイトルや番号を選択し、同じディスク内、又は別の記録媒体に編集記録することができる。

【0156】編集の一例としては、前記各メニュー表示 40 画面において、編集画面88に対し、選択したタイトルをマウス等でドラックやクリックしてコピーし、「編集」ボタン89を選択すると、コピーしたタイトルの順番にその録画情報が編集されて再記録される。

【0157】この際利用する記録媒体としては、大容量のDVD-RAM16が望ましいが、HDD, PD, M O等を利用しても良い。

【0158】また、前記図2でも示したように、番組及びインデックス情報としては、通常、放送局21から配信される情報以外に、コンビニエンス・ストアー、書

店、駅の売店等のキーステーション22において配信される各種の情報、例えば番組のあらすじや、番組の予告に相当する情報、出演者のプロフィール等がDVDーR AM16に記録可能であり、前述の(検索・表示)及び(予約設定)の欄でも説明したように、これを再生して番組の記録内容を一目で把握することも容易にできる。【0159】編集結果は、前記DVDーRAM16のような大容量のディスクでは、同じディスク内での編集でも良いが、別に複数のディスクを装着できるような画像記録再生出力装置似て、異なるディスクに転送編集して

【0160】この場合は、映画、音楽、ドラマ等のジャンル別にディスクを用意したり、連続ドラマでは、そのシリーズで専用のディスクを用意して一つにまとめることができる。

【0161】なお、同じディスクに編集記録する場合には、インデックス記録領域16a(図5参照)の一部に、編集したい番組内容のインデックス情報と実際の画像記録領域を表わすアドレス情報を記録する(図6参照)。

【0162】一方、別のディスクに編集結果を記録する 場合には、編集したインデックス情報と動画等の再生デ ータの両方を転送して記録させればよい。

【0163】あるディスクに編集した録画情報を再生する場合は、そのディスクを画像出力装置に挿入すると、自動的にインデックス情報がTV等に表示される。この場合のインデックス情報の表示形式も当然階層構造となっており、番組のあらすじ、出演者等の詳細を容易に検索表示できるようになっている。つまり、前記同様にリモコン、マウス、キーボード等の入力装置14により希望するメニューから希望する番組を選択することで、容易に希望する番組の再生を行なうことができる。

【0164】したがって、放送局21から配信された番 組情報を予め記録したDVD-RAM等の記録媒体16 を利用することにより、当該番組情報に基づき番組表や 番組内容等の様々な情報を任意の形態の一覧表として表 示することができるばかりか、この番組表から所望の番 ・組を直接指定して録画予約を行ない、その録画予約情報 を前記インデックス情報記録領域16 a に記録されてい る指定された番組の番組情報に対応させて管理すること ができ、しかも、この録画予約情報に従って実際に番組 が録画される際には、録画予約した番組の画像が動画記 録領域16bに記録されると共に、対応する番組情報に 付加する形態で、録画日時、録画開始位置、録画時間等 のインデックス情報を記録して管理できるので、番組情 報の検索,表示,録画予約,編集等を非常に簡単な操作 で行なうことができ、しかも、新聞や雑誌の番組欄だけ では知り得ない各番組の内容や出演者のプロフィール等 の情報をも、すぐに入手することができるようになる。

[0165]

【発明の効果】以上のように、本発明の請求項1に係わる番組情報の記録媒体によれば、例えば光ディスクに対して、少なくともチャンネル番号、番組名、放送年月日、放送開始時間、放送終了時間を含む番組情報が予め記録されているので、この光ディスクを再生装置に掛ければ、所望の番組に関する情報を瞬時に検索して見ることができるようになる。

【O166】よって、番組に関する様々な情報を素早く 探し出して見ることがことが可能になる。

【0167】また、本発明の請求項2に係わる情報記録 10 装置によれば、ユーザが立ち寄り易いキーステーション に配置され、少なくともチャンネル番号、番組名、放送 年月日、放送開始時間、放送終了時間を含む番組情報を 受信して記憶している。この記憶された番組情報をユー ザが持参した例えば光ディスクや磁気ディスク、光磁気 ディスク等のDVD-RAMやリムーバブルHDD、M O等の小型の書き換え可能な記録媒体に対して記録する ことで、ユーザはこの記録媒体に記憶された番組情報に 基づいて容易に録画予約の設定を行なうことが可能とな る。また、ユーザが記録媒体を持参しない場合には、新 20 規な記録媒体(CD-ROMのような書き換え不可能な 媒体でも良い) に番組情報を記録してユーザに販売する ことで、ユーザは同様に記録媒体に記憶された番組情報 に基づいて容易に録画予約の設定を行なうことが可能と なる。

【0168】また、本発明の請求項3に係わる番組情報の記録媒体を使用した録画予約装置によれば、少なくともチャンネル番号,番組名,放送年月日,放送開始時間,放送終了時間を含む番組情報を予め記録してなる光ディスク等の記録媒体から読み出された番組情報が表示 30され、この表示された番組情報に基づいて番組録画の予約が設定されるので、所望の番組に関するチャンネル番号,番組名,放送年月日,放送開始時間,放送終了時間をそのまま録画予約の情報として設定できるようになる。

【0169】よって、新聞やテレビ雑誌等を参考にする 必要なく、所望の番組の録画予約を容易に且つ正確に行 なうことが可能になる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】本発明の実施形態に係わる番組録画予約装置の 40 構成を示すブロック図。

【図2】前記番組録画予約装置のディスク再生部にセットする記録媒体としてDVD(デジタルビデオディスク)-RAMを利用した場合の番組情報入手経路を示す図。

【図3】放送局から配信される番組情報のデータフォー マットの一例を示す図。

【図4】前記番組録画予約装置のディスク再生部にセットされる記録媒体に記録される各チャンネル,各番組毎の番組情報の記録状態を示す図。

【図5】DVD-RAMにおける情報記録領域の割り当て状態を示す図。

20

【図6】前記DVD-RAMの番組及びインデックス情報記録領域に記録されるインデックス情報の一例を示す図。

【図7】前記DVD-RAMに対する放送番組の録画に 伴なうインデックス情報記録処理を示すフローチャート

【図8】前記DVD-RAMに対する記録情報の検索・表示に係わる構成を中心として示すプロック図。

【図9】ジャンル別表示による放送番組の一覧表示状態を示す図。

【図10】ジャンル別の階層表示による放送番組の一覧 表示状態を示す図。

【図11】前記録画予約装置の番組録画の予約に係わる 構成を示すブロック図。

【図12】図11における録画予約装置のシステムコントローラを中心とした録画予約処理を示すフローチャート-

【図13】図11における録画予約装置の録画予約処理 に伴なう日付別予約処理を示すフローチャート。

【図14】図11における録画予約装置の録画予約処理 に伴なうジャンル別予約処理を示すフローチャート。

【図15】図11における録画予約装置の録画予約処理 に伴なう子供簡単予約処理を示すフローチャート。

【図16】図11における録画予約装置の録画予約処理 に伴なうユーザ登録処理を示すフローチャート。

【図17】前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理に伴なうメインメニュー画面の表示状態を示す図。

【図18】前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理に伴なう日 付別予約画面の表示状態を示す図。

【図19】前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理に伴なうト ピックス画面の表示状態を示す図。

【図20】前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理に伴なうジャンル別予約画面の表示状態を示す図。

【図21】前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理に伴なうスポーツ番組用予約画面の表示状態を示す図。

【図22】前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理に伴なう子供簡単予約画面の第1表示状態を示す図。

【図23】前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理に伴なう子 供簡単予約画面の第2表示状態を示す図。

【図24】前記録画予約装置の録画予約処理に伴なうユーザ登録画面の表示状態を示す図。

【図25】DVD-RAMに記録された番組録画情報を編集する場合のジャンル別メニュー表示画面を示す図。

【図26】図25におけるジャンル別メニュー表示画面から選択されたスポーツジャンル別メニュー表示画面を示す図。

【図27】番組録画情報の編集処理に伴なう番組内容詳 50 細画面の表示状態を示す図。

【符号の説明】

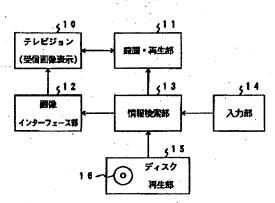
10 …テレビジョン(モニタ)(表示装置)、

21

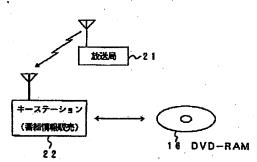
- 11 …録画・再生部、
- 12 …画像インターフェイス部、
- 13 …情報検索部、
- 13a…フラグ検索手段、
- 14 …入力部(入力装置)、
- 15 …ディスク再生部、
- 16 ···記錄媒体 (DVD-RAM)、
- 16a…番組及びインデックス情報記録領域、
- 16al…番組データベース、
- 16a2…指定番組データベース、
- 16b…動画記録領域、
- 21 …放送局、
- 22 …キーステーション、
- 30 …録画予約装置、
- 31 …システムコントローラ、
- 31a…一覧表作成手段、
- 32 …受信手段、
- 33 …時計回路、

- * 3 4 …記憶装置、
 - 71 …登録ユーザ欄、
 - 72 …「日付予約」項目、
 - 73 …「ジャンル予約」項目、
 - 74 …「子供簡単予約」項目、
 - 75 …「ユーザ指定」項目、
 - 76 …「日付」項目、
 - 77 …「選択」項目、
 - 78 …「取消」項目、
- 10 79 …「終了」項目、
 - 80 …「登録」項目、
 - 81 …「トピックス」項目、
 - 82 …記録時間変更欄、
 - 83 …「〇」項目、
 - 84 …「X」項目、
 - 8.5 …手印項目、
 - 86 …「指定」項目、
 - 87 …「削除」項目、
 - 88 …編集画面、
- *20 89 …「編集」項目。

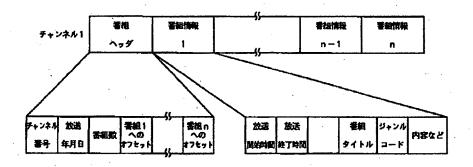
[図1]



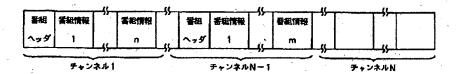
[図2]



【図3】

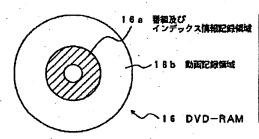


[図4]



【図5】

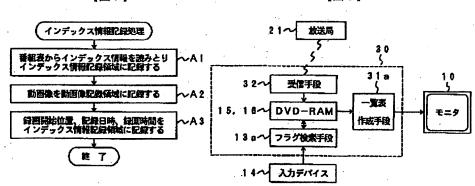
【図6】



	銀頭1	舜國2
番組タイトル	ナイター中催	東芝日曜劇場
2 5	スポーツ	ドラマ
郑画B 中	1998/7/20	1998/7/21
母面別給位置	LN1000	LN5000
超国時間 (分)	120	. 80

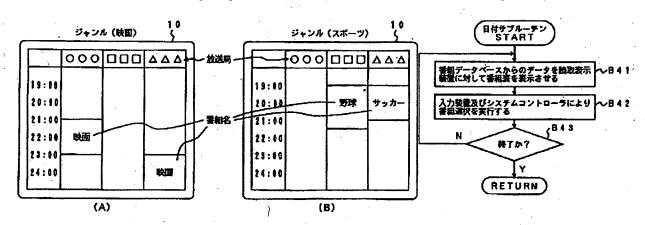
【図7】

[図8]

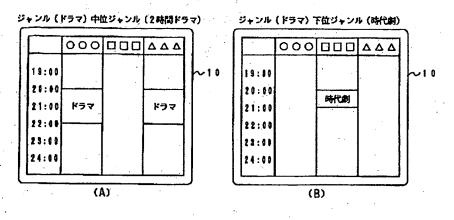


【図9】

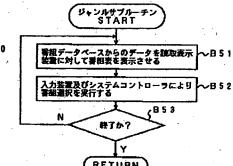
【図13】



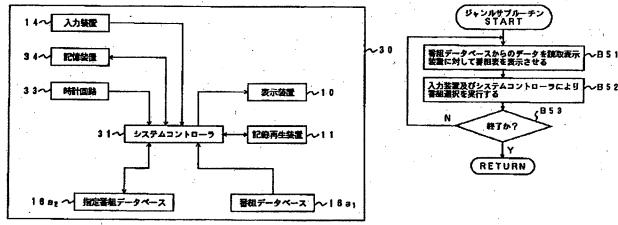
【図10】

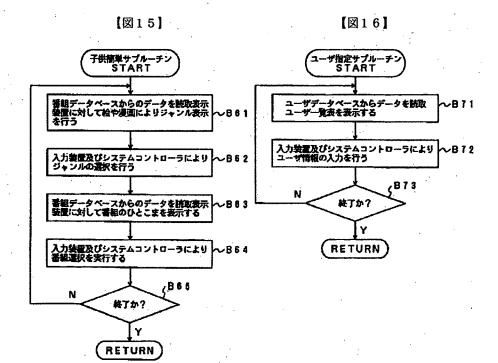


【図11】



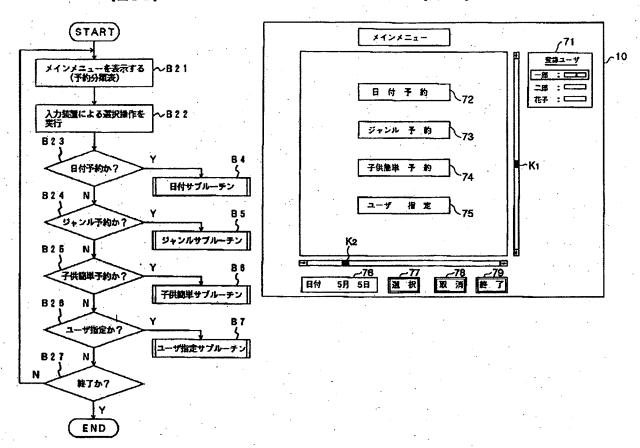
【図14】



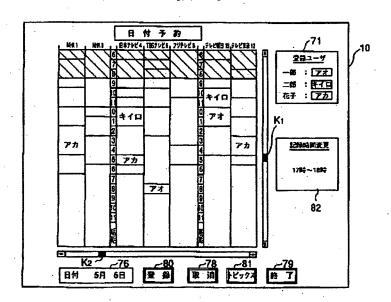


【図12】

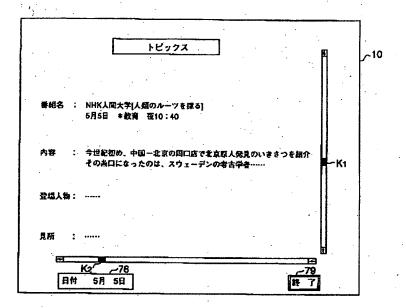
【図17】



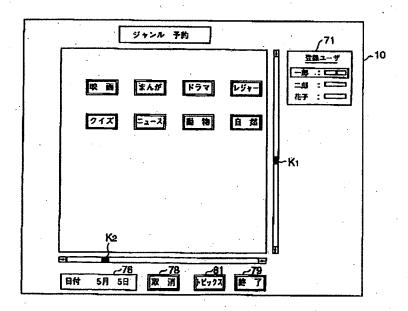
[図18]



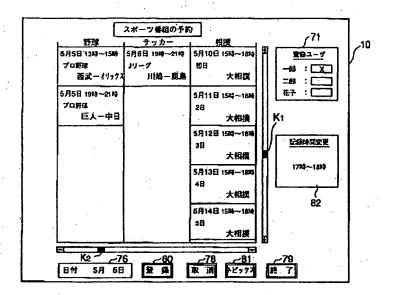
[図19]



【図20】



[図21]



【図22】

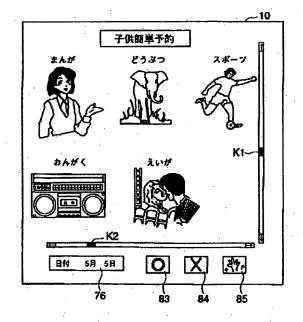
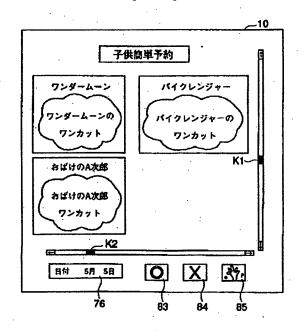
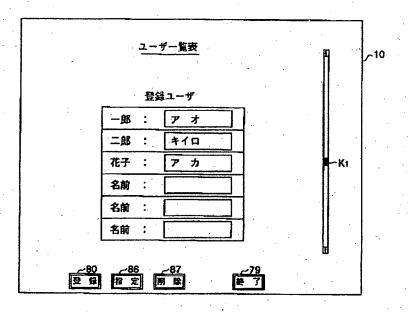


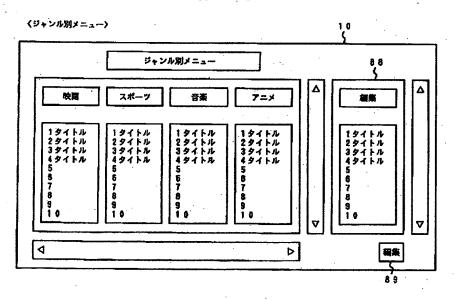
図23]



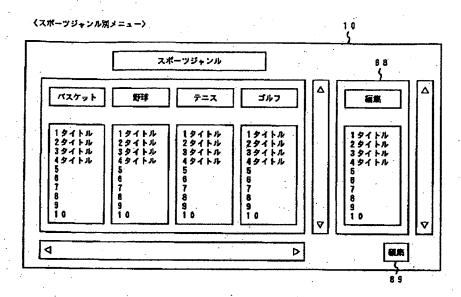
[図24]



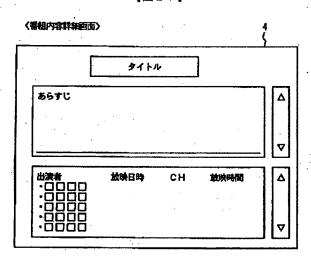
【図25】



【図26】



[図27]



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